Multiple cruise ships to dock on Saipan. PAGE 2
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Hafa Adai!

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75¢

9TH CIRCUIT AFFIRMS MANGLONA'S RULING

'Non-NMDs can vote on Art. 12'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit affirmed yesterday the 2014 landmark decision of U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, who ruled that qualified voters who are not of Northern Marianas descent must have the opportunity to vote on Article 12 initiative and any other initiatives to amend Article 12.

Manglona

See NON-NMDS on Page 4

MICHAEL T. SANTOS
The new DUKW vehicle of Island Turtle Tours is shown parked at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. The vessel is the only original DUKW remaining for commercial operations and should be expected to receive customers as early as Jan. 2.

A 'unique amphibious tour' of Saipan

By MICHAEL T. SANTOS
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REPORTER

Saipan's tourism industry has a new player named Island Turtle Tours, an amphibious vehicle that transports its passengers around Saipan and Managaha while giving historical information of landmarks along their path.

Island Turtle Tours operates under an exclusive sales agreement with Century Tours/Saipan Adventures. Their vessel, called Woody, is one of the very few original DUKW vehicles that are used for commercial operations. ITT chief operating officer Michael Dilley bought the vehicle from a vendor in Chicago that specializes in them. The DUKW vehicles were used during World War II to transport soldiers and cargo to and from the frontlines.

"There are no others of these original DUKWs in the region and only a very few left operating commercially or in the world for that matter," said Ed Arriola Jr., Century Tours marketing manager. "It's a great addition to the image of the CNMI as well as for

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Inos, a visionary leader

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As the Commonwealth commemorates the first anniversary of his passing, the late governor Eloy S. Inos is best remembered by many CNMI officials and those closest to him as a leader with a vision for the CNMI.

Inos

While serving as the CNMI's seventh chief executive, Inos died on the afternoon of Dec. 28, morning of Dec. 29 in the CNMI, while recovering in a Seattle hospital after an open-heart surgery.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres told *Saipan Tribune* that he lost a friend and mentor when the former governor died last year. "It was one of the saddest and shocking news for me to receive this time last year."

"I definitely felt an empty part in my heart for losing a mentor that respects my inputs and shared my vision. We worked very closely and we share the same vision for the CNMI, which is to revive

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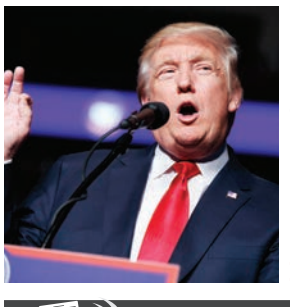
NOTICE

There will be no issue of *Saipan Tribune* on Jan. 2, 2017.

Happy New Year!

INSIDE



NATION
President-elect Donald Trump raises the prospect that America may act alone.

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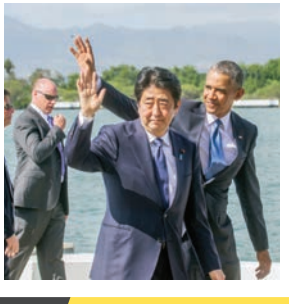

ASIA
The leaders of Japan and the United States take to the hallowed waters of Pearl Harbor.

PAGE 17

LIFE & STYLE
No one could make us laugh through the pain like Carrie Fisher.

PAGE 20

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

‘Response time to Susupe blaze was within parameters’

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Firemen’s response time to the fire that burned an apartment/barracks in Susupe last Thursday was within response parameters, according to Commissioner Claudio K. Norita of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

At a press briefing yesterday, Norita also denied allegations that a couple of fire trucks that responded contained no water.

Norita said the first to arrive at the scene were rescue 1 and medics 4 from the Susupe fire station and indeed they have no water.

The rescue 1 vehicle contains equipment like the jaws of life and other rescue gear, while medics 4 is an ambulance, said DFEMS spokesman Derek Gersonde.

Norita said the rescue 1 and medics 4 vehicles arrived at the scene at 5:26pm, three minutes after DFEMS received a report about the structure fire.

With respect to fire trucks, Norita said engine 1 from the Kagman fire station was the first to arrive at the scene at 5:34pm, while engine 2 from the Garapan fire station arrived at 5:41pm.

The call about the fire was made at 5:23pm.

Norita

Fire captain Jesse Mesa reported that the fire was contained at 6:33pm and placed under control at 7:25pm.

As to the concerns of some residents that the blaze wouldn’t have engulfed the entire apartment if firefighters immediately sprayed water onto the affected unit, Norita said that firefighters are trained and certified.

“They know what they are doing,” said Norita, adding that how they fight the fire depends on the supervisor’s assessment of the situation.

The commissioner stressed that bystanders or occupants of the affected structure are not allowed to help firefighters.

Norita said a fire truck’s tank only has 1,000 gallon of water,which can be used up in just three minutes.

He noted the fire scene had no active fire hydrants in the area so the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. had to activate the hydrants.

It was at 6:47pm that a request was made to CUC Water Division to turn on available fire hydrants in the area, according to DFEMS report. The hydrants were activated at 7:19pm.

Fire investigators ruled that the fire wasn’t set off intentionally but was electrical and accidental in nature. Norita said investigation looks in that direction and determined that someone had left a gas stove unattended.

The fire burned a semi-concrete apartment/barracks on Tupak Street corner Tokcha Avenue in Susupe, displacing several people, mostly construction workers.

Multiple cruise ships to dock on Saipan

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

Three cruise ships are expected to make port calls on Saipan in the next few days.

Saipan Shipping Co. would be the vessel agent and will be handling the MS *Asuka II* on Dec. 31 and the largest cruise ship to call on Saipan, *Costa Atlantica,* which would drop by on Jan. 7, 2017, on its way to China. *Costa Atlantica* is 960 feet long, with a capacity for 2,680 persons.

A&T Shipping would handle *Nippon Maru*, which expects to dock on Saipan on Dec. 31.

MS *Asuka II* expects to bring in 750 tourists, while the *Nippon Maru* would bring in 450 tourists, for a total of 1,200 tourists in a single visit.

In an earlier interview with *Saipan Tribune,* Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Chris Concepcion shared the potential of the cruise industry and the opportunities the CNMI has to offer.

“We are hopeful this can contribute to our overall economy at a time when hotel occupancy rates are at an all-time high. The Marianas offers a huge potential to cruise ships because we have not just one island but multiple islands that can be visited,” said Concepcion.

Saipan Shipping operations manager Jose Quan said the MS *Asuka II* would be arriving at 8am on Dec. 31, while a specific time for the *Costa Atlantica* has yet to be announced.

Quan also mentioned in an earlier interview that a cruise ship terminal is essential for efficient docking and an even more enjoyable experience for tourists.

“Saipan needs to create a proper cruise ship terminal. …The clearance process requires coordination between six different government organizations that will deem a ship cleared upon arrival. Until this is created, vessel agents will have to plan for additional resources to accommodate for the deficiencies due to a non-existent cruise ship terminal,” he said.

The *Nippon Maru* is a cruise ship classified as a “museum ship,” meaning it is a ship that has been memorialized due to its significance to the military and the like. The *Nippon Maru* was used for the training of cadets of the Japanese merchant marine and was converted into a museum ship in 1984. The *Nippon Maru* is permanently docked at the Yokohama harbor of Japan, residing in the memorial park of the same name, the Nippon Maru Memorial Park.

MS *Asuka II* is a cruise ship owned and operated by one of the world’s oldest and largest shipping companies, called Nippon Yusen Kaisha, based in Tokyo, Japan.

The MS *Asuka II* measures 791 feet long with a capacity for 960 passengers.

A GRAND NEW YEAR’S EVE DINNER
Saturday, 31 December 2016 from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Be spoilt for choice this New Year’s Eve as *Giovanni’s* and *Kili Café & Terrace* offer a grand buffet on the last day of 2016. The grand buffet includes free-flowing premium wine, sparkling wine, beer, iced tea and soft drinks.
Price: US$80 per person
US$60 Club at the *Hyatt*® Member
US$40 per child (ages 6-12)

Dine in classic Japanese ambiance and delight in delicacies of *Miyako*. The dinner buffet includes free-flowing sparkling wine, Asahi Beer and green tea.
Price: US$80 per person
US$60 Club at the *Hyatt*® Member
US$40 per child (ages 6-12)

NEW YEAR’S DAY
Sunday, 1 January 2017

Giovanni’s and *Kili Café & Terrace* offer a grand New Year’s brunch with live carving stations, inclusive of sparkling wine, mimosa cocktails, wines beer, iced tea and soft drinks from 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM.
Price: US$60 per person
US$45 Club at the *Hyatt*® Member
US$30 per child (ages 6-12)

Miyako offers a luxuriant selection of seafood, a variety of sushi and traditional delicacies of New Year’s Day. The lunch buffet is from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM.
Price: US$60 per person
US$45 Club at the *Hyatt*® Member
US$30 per child (ages 6-12)

Teppanyaki offers an awe-inspiring dinner menu featuring king prawns, Australian wagyu beef sirloin and crab fried rice – a set course menu awaits you for both Christmas eve and Christmas day dinner.
Price: US$120 per person
US$ 100 Club at the *Hyatt*® Member
US$40 per child (ages 6-12)
*Two seating arrangements, at 5:30 PM and 8:00 PM

Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one….sparks!!
What memory makes you smile?

NEW YEAR’S EVE BEACH FRONT COUNT DOWN
Saturday, 31 December 2016 from 10:00 PM to 1:30 AM

Join us beachfront for New Year’s Eve filled with champagne, laughter, friends, sparklers and fireworks as we countdown to 2017. With three bars, a beverage selection featuring champagne, sparkling wine and select beers as well as a raffle drawing every hour on the hour, this will be the place to ring in the new year.

Reservations are highly recommended, please call +1 234 1234 ext. 26 for more information.

‘Courts may order govt to pay land compensation’

On Dec. 28, 2016, the Supreme Court issued a ruling in *Commonwealth v. Lot No. 218-5 R/W, 2016 MP 17*, holding that the trial court did not violate the separation of powers doctrine in ordering the Commonwealth to pay a land compensation judgment out of funds that are not appropriated for that purpose. The high court, however, vacated the court’s writ of execution ordering the payment and remanded the matter on other grounds.

The appeal arose from the Commonwealth’s taking of Luisa B. Quitugua’s land in As Teo, Saipan for public use in 1996, over 20 years ago. In 2005, the trial court entered a judgment directing the Commonwealth to pay Quitugua approximately $77,000 plus interest as land compensation. When the Commonwealth repeatedly failed to pay, the trial court issued a writ of execution seizing all monies and proceeds in the Commonwealth’s bank accounts up to the “amount necessary to satisfy the judgment.” The court also issued a related order applying a 9 percent post-judgment interest rate.

On appeal, the Commonwealth argued the court violated the separation of powers doctrine by compelling the government to pay from funds that are not appropriated for land compensation. In addition, the Commonwealth contended the court violated sovereign immunity in applying the statutory 9 percent post-judgment interest rate.

In discussing the separation of powers issue, the Supreme Court first summarized the existing law. The takings clauses of the Commonwealth and federal constitutions provide that private property may not be taken without just compensation. Under the separation of powers doctrine and the appropriations clause of the CNMI Constitution, the Legislature has the sole power to make appropriations. The high court referred to its prior decision, which held that the Commonwealth courts may not order the government to pay land compensation judgments out of funds that are not appropriated for settlements and awards. In light of both policy and legal reasons, however, the high court revisited the decision in *Lot No. 353 New G*.

As for policy concerns, the high court noted the government’s repeated failure to pay land compensation. While the right to just compensation is a well-settled, natural right, many landowners have been waiting for compensation to no avail. In this case, over 20 years have passed since the taking of Quitugua’s land, and the government has still not satisfied its obligation. As for legal considerations, other jurisdictions have held that a lack of legislatively appropriated funds does not justify non-payment of land compensations. The high court applied applicable principles to harmonize the takings clause and appropriations clause and found that the appropriations clause should not be interpreted as inhibiting the takings clause in the Commonwealth Constitution.

In conclusion, the Supreme Court held that when the government takes private property for public use and fails to compensate the landowners, the Commonwealth courts have the authority to order the government to pay land compensation judgments even in the absence of legislatively appropriated funds. The high court decided that this ruling must apply retroactively to all civil cases that have not reached final judgment, including those pending on remand to the trial court. The high court, however, found the writ of execution was an improper method to enforce judgments against the Commonwealth. Accordingly, the Supreme Court vacated the writ of execution and remanded with instructions to use a proper method to enforce the judgment owed to Quitugua.

As for the interest rate issue, the Supreme Court found the trial court erred in applying a statutory 9 percent post-judgment interest rate because the statutory rate does not apply to the government absent explicit consent of the government. On remand, the trial court is instructed to determine the proper post-judgment interest rate.

The Supreme Court’s full opinion is available at http://www.cnmilaw.org/supreme16.html.

For further information, contact the Supreme Court at 236-9715. ***(NMI Judiciary)***

High court vacates order setting amount of income to be withheld

On Dec. 28, 2016, the Supreme Court issued its ruling in *Domingo v. Celis*, 2016 MP 18, holding that the trial court did not abuse its discretion in allowing David I. Celis to orally oppose a motion for an income withholding order without having filed a written opposition, but vacated the order and remanded for a new hearing on other grounds.

This appeal stemmed from Celis’ obligation to pay child support for Jessica C. Domingo’s two children. In 2015, the court found Celis to be delinquent on child support and ordered him to pay the arrears. Subsequently, Domingo filed a motion for an income withholding order, asking the court to withhold $350 per month from Celis’ paycheck for the child support arrears. Celis did not file a written opposition to the motion nor was he present at the hearing, but his attorney asserted that Celis had two other minor children to support and requested that the court reduce the withholding amount from $350 to $250. Relying on that assertion, the court issued an order withholding $250 per month from Celis’ income.

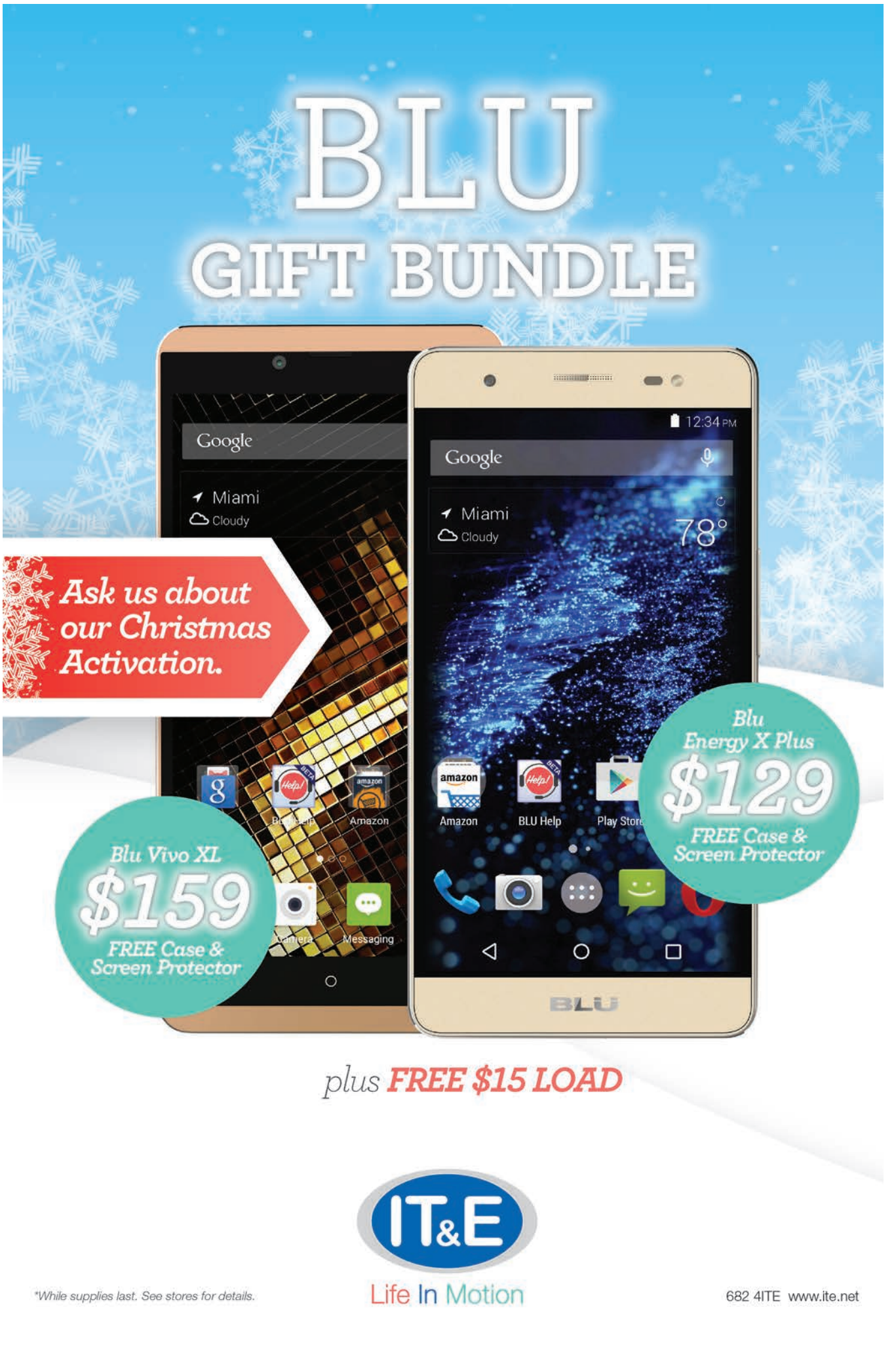
On appeal, Domingo raised two arguments: first, that the court erred when it permitted Celis to orally oppose the motion without having filed a written opposition; second, that the court impermissibly reduced the withholding amount based on statements made by Celis’ attorney without supporting testimony or evidence.

As to the first issue, the Supreme Court determined that the NMI Rules of Civil Procedure do not explicitly prohibit a party from presenting oral arguments when he or she has not filed a written opposition. The high court also noted that family law matters call for flexibility of court rules and that Domingo failed to demonstrate that she was impermissibly disadvantaged by Celis’ oral arguments. For these reasons, the Supreme Court concluded that the trial court did not abuse its discretion in allowing Celis to orally oppose the motion.

The Supreme Court then addressed the second issue on the attorney’s assertion as evidence. The Supreme Court noted that statements by attorneys are not evidence. Therefore, the high court concluded the trial court abused its discretion when it reduced the withholding amount solely based on Celis’ attorney’s assertion that Celis had to support two other minor children. Accordingly, the high court vacated the order setting the amount of income to be withheld and remanded for a new hearing on this issue.

The Supreme Court’s full opinion is available at http://www.cnmilaw.org/supreme16.html.

For further information, contact the Supreme Court at 236-9715. ***(NMI Judiciary)***



Peers and family mourn Wonenberg's passing

The recent passing of Northern Marianas College art instructor Barry Wonenberg has left family and peers emotional during a wake held yesterday in his honor at the Borja Funeral Homes.

One of Wonenberg 's former students, Rep. Ed Propst (Ind-Saipan), was one of many that was saddened by the tragedy.

"He was a dear family friend. He was also an instructor of mine all the way back in 1989 and 1990. I worked for his wife, Maggie Wonenberg, at the English lab at NMC back then. My dad worked at NMC, so [Wonenberg and he] were colleagues and dear friends and we've known each other for a long time, so it's really saddening," said Propst.

Agnes McPhetres, Northern Marianas Trades Institute president and president emeritus of NMC, could not hold back tears as she remembered Wonenberg, who taught at NMC for 25 years.

"He was actually the person that I really wanted to hire, because NMC back then didn't have arts, and art is a program that is really important for the college," said McPhetres. "He was our art instructor and has been there for so many years; he built the art department and was a really good teacher—well loved by the students, and was very dedicated…"

The interview with McPhetres had to be cut short as she was overcome with emotions.

Wonenberg, who is survived by his wife, Maggie, and their three children, represented the CNMI in various international art contests overseas.

He was 58 years old. ***(Erwin Encinares)***

UFO donates $500 to Simbang Gabi Group

Making it in time before Christmas started, the United Filipino Organization donated $500 to the Saipan Simbang Gabi Group last Saturday.

The donation took place during UFO's appreciation night held at the residence of outgoing UFO president Romeo Malasarte in Susupe.

The donation will be used to help rehabilitate a school in the Philippines that was severely damaged by a typhoon. A plaque of appreciation was also awarded to Renato Gaviola at the event.

A UFO supporter, Marilou Malasarte, said, "This donation is very important. A lot of children from the Philippines will be supported by the money being donated today."

"I think any form of donation given holds every bit of importance. The money will be used for a good cause," Marilou Malasarte added.

The donation came from various fundraising events held by UFO in 2016.

Simbang Gabi group president Malou Mendoza extended thanks to the organization for their continuing hard work for the Filipino community. ***(Michael T. Santos)***

INOS

From Page 1

the economy up to where we needed to fund the government's basic services," Torres said.

He added that Inos took risks in order to get their vision off the ground.

He said the former governor's plans and their partnership resulted in changes in the CNMI's once weak economy. "Because it is the only way for us to get revenue for the government—revenue that can be used to address basic services and programs for the people. When he passed away and I assumed office, I made sure his vision would continue since that is what the people voted us for. That is what the people voted us for."

"The vision that we have under the Republican Party and the same vision that we had: proven leadership, and providing a better lifestyle and living for the community," Torres said.

Houser Speaker Rafael S. Demapan (R-Saipan) recalled how Inos served the CNMI during the time when the economy was struggling. "He was known to be a very humble person and a remarkable leader. We continue to pray for his family."

"His legacy and contribution is—he was there during the time when the CNMI needed him most, during the time when the economy was down. The things that he did for the Commonwealth will be forever remembered."

Demapan said he felt that he lost a special friend after Inos died. "I often think of him on what would be his advice when we deliberate on issues and policies. I often seek his counsel when I need good advice. I know he is spiritually with us."

House minority leader Ramon A. Tebuteb (Ind-Saipan) and Rep. Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) also commended the work Inos did in leading the CNMI during one of its most difficult times.

"It seems like a long time ago. We had great respect for him after what he did to the CNMI during those difficult times and when he was elevated to become governor. He has always been a person with a vision and very articulate [but] he comes down to your level," said Tebuteb.

"He was the governor from the 18th to the 19th Legislature. It was really unfortunate a person with a good character like him had to leave us. We could always look after the late governor and emulate what he did. He led the CNMI during the toughest of times," added Deleon Guerrero.

Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) said he is thankful that he had the chance to learn certain things from the late governor when they both worked for Tan-Holdings. He was fresh out of college when he worked under Inos' guidance.

"He is a one guy that holds a lot of information and is very understanding. He could speak in different levels and pass on the knowledge that he had to whoever is interested in learning. He was not greedy in sharing his knowledge and is very protective of people under him."

He added that Inos was also known as a hard working leader, especially when he became part of the Cabinet of former governor Benigno Fitial. "He made sure that there would be source of funds when he was still the Finance secretary. Whether it is for the rainy days, he was concerned with spending measures."

Another member of the independent minority, Rep. Roman C. Benavente, recalled how Inos helped the Board of Education and the Public School System when he still handled the CNMI's finances. Benavente is a former BOE chair.

"He was very well-rounded and took issues and other things that challenged him in a very positive way. I had the chance to work with him under the administration of [then-governor Fitial and former lieutenant governor Tim Villagomez] being the BOE chair at that time. He was then the Finance secretary and met him a number of times to discuss the PSS budget."

"He made things happen, he did not back down from challenges and issues. He tried to solve problems as quickly as possible to the best of his abilities. Sometimes he won't give us the budget that we needed but he always made sure that he won't shortchange PSS. He always gave PSS enough budget for its operations and other needs."

Rep. Vinson E. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) said that Inos proved to be one of the CNMI's great leaders. "I never had the chance to work with him except in the 19th Legislature but he proved to be a great leader. He has held many positions both in the private and public sectors."

"One thing that truly stands out was the way he led the CNMI during those difficult times. He knew his economic position and when to make his moves. He was fiscally responsible and he was able to keep the ship going despite the challenges that we faced back then."

UNIQUE

From Page 1

the new products that Century Tours currently has such as Let's Go Tours and the soon to be re-opened Seatouch at the Fiesta Resort and Spa."

Turtle Tours was founded by Oliver "Pete" Shilling, Ivan Ilmov, and Michael Dilley.

Inspiration came from riding a DUKW during a simple family trip to Guam by the Dilley family.

"We're very proud. We still have a lot of work to do and we've come a long way with our vessel, Woody. It's like we have a new baby and he/she is finally coming of age to the world and it gives us a lot of pride," said Dilley.

ITT operates the only authentic 1945 un-modified military DUKW in the whole of the Pacific region.

"You don't only get to see the history but physically feel and experience it the way the military did back in 1943 and 1945 here on the island," said Dilley.

Life jackets and fire extinguishers are always available within the entire duration of the trip, along with pumps to release 300 gallons of water per minute in case of any leakage.

Turtle Tours expects to start operating by Jan. 2. A year was spent refurbishing the vehicle as well as training its staff.

"We just want to do everything right," Dilley said. "From the facility environment to the equipment, we spared no expense in the making of our business."

There is another company that operates a similar type of amphibious land/water product, but Dilley wishes to remind the public they are nothing alike.

"The two vehicles are completely different in their construction and operation. The competitors' operation is based on "Ride the Duck's style of operations. We are just two different types of operations completely," he said.

Steven Connor, office manager, said, "This is just one additional thing tourists can do on island that offers a very unique experience they can't find anywhere else."

Tickets start at $45 per person. Duration of the tour is about one hour and children under 2 years old are free, 2-11 costs $30, and all those over the age of 11 go for $35. One can call 235-3716 or email moi.cnmi@gmail.com to make a reservation. To inquire about the product, visit the Saipan Adventures office at either Kanoa Resort in Chalan Kanoa or Fiesta Resort & Spa in the heart of Garapan.

NON-NMDS

From Page 1

In a 17-page opinion, the Ninth Circuit held that the voter restriction in Article 18, section 5(c) of the CNMI Constitution is race-based and violates the 15th Amendment.

The 15th Amendment establishes that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

The Ninth Circuit noted that the voting restriction in Article 18, Section 5(c) would divide the CNMI citizenry between NMDs and non-NMDs when voting on amendments to a property restriction that affects everyone.

The Ninth Circuit determined that the 15th Amendment "aims to prevent precisely this sort of division in voting."

Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas penned the opinion. Circuit judges Consuelo M. Callahan and Mary H. Murguia concurred with Thomas.

The Ninth Circuit judges said that Article 12, Section 4 of the CNMI Constitution contains a race-based definition of NMD. By restricting voting on the basis of this definition, Article 18, Section 5(c) enacts a race-based restriction on voting, the judges said.

Article 18, Section 5(c) thus violates the 15th Amendment, they said.

The Ninth Circuit judges said Manglona was correct to enjoin its enforcement.

In a 51-page decision issued in May 2014, Manglona ruled that Northern Marianas descent, as defined in Section 4 of Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution, is a racial classification, and under federal law it may not serve as the basis for preventing otherwise qualified voters from voting on proposed amendments to Article 12.

"Even if Northern Marianas descent were not a racial classification, it would be unconstitutional to deny non-NMDs the right to vote on Article 12 initiatives because the restriction is not narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling state purpose," Manglona said.

Manglona issued the ruling in favor of John H. Davis Jr., a registered CNMI voter who, through counsel Jeanne H. Rayphand, sued the Commonwealth Election Commission, its chairperson and executive director, and then-governor Eloy S. Inos in his desire to vote on any initiative to amend Article 12.

Article 12 restricts the acquisition of permanent and long-term interests in real property to persons of NMD.

Article 18 Section 5(c) prohibits qualified voters who are not NMDs from voting on Article 12 initiatives.

CEC and co-defendants, through the Office of the Attorney General, appealed Manglona's ruling to the Ninth Circuit.

During the pendency of the appeal, the CNMI government sought to enjoin counting of ballots cast in the November 2014 special election. The Ninth Circuit denied the request pending presentation of the motion to the district court. Manglona did not grant the injunction.

The election was held on Nov. 4, 2014. With both NMDs and non-NMDs eligible to vote, a majority of CNMI voters ratified Legislative Initiative 18-1.

Legislative Initiative 18-1 amended the definition of NMD in Article 12, section 4 by altering the required amount of "Northern Marianas Chamorro or Northern Marianas Carolinian blood" to qualify as an NMD from "one quarter" to "some." It also removed NMD status from adopted children who would not otherwise qualify as NMDs.

It established a court procedure for people with less than "one quarter Northern Marianas Chamorro or Northern Marianas Carolinian blood" to attain legal NMD status.

At the Ninth Circuit hearing, assistant attorney general Charles Edmond Brasington argued for CEC and co-defendants. Rayphand argued for Davis.

Man pleads guilty to 'ice' possession

An ex-convict arrested by the CNMI Drug Enforcement Task Force in August for allegedly selling methamphetamine or "ice" on Saipan pleaded guilty yesterday to illegal possession of a controlled substance.

John Richard Palacios Deleon Guerrero will be sentenced on May 17, 2017 at 9am. He asked for a presentence investigation report.

His jury trial on Jan. 30, 2017, was vacated and he was remanded into the custody of the Department of Corrections.

Last Aug. 30, the Office of the Attorney General charged Deleon Guerrero with two counts of trafficking of a controlled substance, two counts of illegal possession of a controlled substance, one count of conspiracy to commit trafficking of a controlled substance, two counts of unlawful possession of a firearm, and one count of unlawful possession of ammunition. The charges carry a total maximum sentence of 100 years.

On Tuesday, the OAG amended the charges to only a count of illegal possession of a controlled substance. All other charges were dropped. If convicted of this one charge, Deleon Guerrero faces a possible prison sentence of five years only.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho said it is the OAG that decides what charges to file and the court can only hear the case.

The judge noted that Deleon Guerrero has prior criminal convictions in four cases charging him with attempts, assault with a dangerous weapon, burglary, and possession of a controlled substance.

In his latest case, Deleon Guerrero, 40, also known as Massi and or Penny, was found in possession of .70 gross grams of crystal methamphetamine.

A "confidential source" told police that John Massi, later identified as Deleon Guerrero, has been selling "ice" on Saipan. The "source" claimed that he/she had previously managed to buy $120 worth of "ice" from Deleon Guerrero.

During a buy-operation, the "confidential source" managed to buy .70 gross grams of "ice" worth $120 from Deleon Guerrero outside his residence in Lower Miha in Garapan last Aug. 18. It was Deleon Guerrero's alleged drug associate who handed the "ice" to the "confidential source."

In May 2015, Deleon Guerrero pleaded guilty to illegal possession of a controlled substance and was slapped with a one-year prison term. In that case he reportedly engaged police officers in a car chase and threw away a small bag containing "ice." ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Mobil Kagman reopens

Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc. announced yesterday the re-opening of the Kagman Mobil service station on Dec. 19, 2016, after the completion of upgrading works.

Kagman Mobil was previously closed for a planned forecourt canopy upgrade that started on Nov. 13, 2016. These included an enhancement of the forecourt canopy decking to include the installation of new energy-efficient LED lights, as well as changing the look and feel of the interior of our convenience store to be consistent with the canopy.

Charles Ewart, president of Mobil Oil Mariana Islands said, "We have been investing to upgrade our service stations over the last few years, and the completion of these improvements at our Kagman service station will boost our overall customer experience there. The enhancements are yet another example of how Mobil continually improves and innovates to better serve our customers and the Saipan community." ***(Mobil)***

LAOLAO BAY GOLF & RESORT
Join us in our Festive Lunch Buffet
on New Year Day, January 1, 2017
at The GRILL
Restaurant
LAOLAO BAY
GOLF & RESORT
From 11:00 am to 3:00 pm
w/ Free Pool Pass
$30.00 Tourist and Local 20% discount
$12.50 for kids (4-11 years old)
For reservations,
Please call 236-8831 / 29 or email us at fnb@laolaobaygolf.com

WANTED

NEWS REPORTER

The *Saipan Tribune* is looking for a FULL-TIME news reporter.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Above average writing skills and can work within deadlines;
- Fast learner, self-starter, and a team player;
- Computer literate;
- With photography skills;
- Must have reliable means of transportation.

If you have what it takes to be part of a dynamic team, email your résumé and samples of your work to editor@saipantribune.com. You may also drop it off at the *Saipan Tribune* office on the second floor of the JP Center Building on Beach Road, Garapan. ON-ISLAND HIRES PREFERRED.

Saipan Tribune, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer.
Qualified women, minorities, and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2017

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an estimated $1,247,600.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of $886,361.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); $293,829.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and, $67,410.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2017.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of person. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

Applications for the use of CPD funds are available for pick up at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) located in Garapan, Saipan; San Jose Village, Tinian; and, Songsong Village, Rota, beginning December 29, 2016. You may also obtain the application online at www.nmhcgov.net in the section titled "Public Notice/Announcement" subsection "Community Planning Development"

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Residents); San Jose, Tinian (Tinian Residents); and, Songsong Village, Rota (Rota Residents) by ***March 31, 2017, no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications submitted after March 31, 2017, will not be accepted.***

A briefing will be conducted for interested applicants and for those applicants who have picked up an application for the use of CPD funds. The briefing will address the program requirements and regulations concerning the usage of CPD funds.

The schedules for briefing are as follows:

January 16, 2017, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Saipan
January 17, 2017, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Rota
January 19, 2017, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Tinian

We are encouraging all non-profit, for profit, and government service providers who are providing services to people with disabilities, homeless individuals, and emergency shelter administrators and operators to attend this briefing.

For residents living on the island of Saipan, the briefing will held at the NMHC Office in Garapan; Residents living on the island of Tinian, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office in San Jose Village; and Residents living on the island of Rota, the briefing will be held at the Rota Mayor's Office Conference Room in Tatachog.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided. Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Mr. Jacob Muna, Planning Assistant at 234-6866 or 234-7689.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

Mochitsuki Festival this Friday

The final night of the annual Christmas in the Marianas celebration will be this Friday, Dec. 30, at Paseo de Marianas, featuring the annual Mochitsuki Festival. The festival marks the season preparation of "mochi"—a dough-like substance of glutinous rice—for the Japanese New Year. Entertainment, games, and food sales will run from 5pm to 10pm.

"It's been a very exciting Christmas in the Marianas celebration all month at Paseo de Marianas, and we invite the community to come down and celebrate the Mochitsuki Festival this Friday before we ring in the New Year over the weekend," said Marianas Visitors Authority Community Projects manager Martin Duenas.

The public is invited to try their hand at "mochi"-pounding beginning at 5pm. "Mochi" is prepared in a hollowed-out log with a wooden mallet. In addition, this Friday's entertainment lineup includes Saipan Awadori Dancers (5pm), Marianas Ukulele (6pm), Saipan Music & Dance School (7pm and 8pm), and FESTPAC Warriors (8:30pm).

Christmas in the Marianas, an annual signature event of the MVA, coordinated in cooperation with by Team PDI and PDM Promoters, is also sponsored and supported this year by T Galleria, TSL Foundation, RNV Construction, Kinpachi Restaurant, Japan Saipan Travel Association, Country House, Moby Dick, Furusato, S.P.E. Saipan, Inc., Misa Enterprises, Inc., KKMP, and Power 99.

During the evening, applications for the MVA's "Marianas-*chan*" (Marianas child) audition will also be available at the MVA information booth near the stage. On Jan. 7, 2017, the MVA will hold auditions for "Marianas-*chan*." It is open to children ages 4-6 to represent the Northern Mariana Islands in select promotions in Japan. The application deadline in Dec. 30, 2016.

For more information on the event, contact MVA Community Projects specialist Ryan Calvo at rcalvo@mymarianas.com or (670) 664-3200/1 or visit www.mymarianas.com. ***(MVA)***

MVA

Ballroom dancers perform at Christmas in the Marianas on Dec. 23, 2016, in downtown Garapan. The annual signature event of the Marianas Visitors Authority will conclude on Dec. 30, 2016, with the Mochitsuki Festival from 5pm to 10pm at Paseo de Marianas.

MVA

A young caroler performs at Christmas in the Marianas on Dec. 23, 2016, in downtown Garapan, Saipan. The annual signature event of the Marianas Visitors Authority will conclude on Dec. 30, 2016, from 5pm to 10pm at Paseo de Marianas.

MVA

Young dancers perform at Christmas in the Marianas on Dec. 23, 2016, in downtown Garapan, Saipan. The annual signature event of the Marianas Visitors Authority will conclude on Dec. 30, 2016, from 5pm to 10pm at Paseo de Marianas.

Judge finds OAG offer too lenient

Finding it too lenient, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho rejected yesterday the government's plea deal that recommends a five-year prison term for 65-year-old retiree Manases Masga Manglona Sr., who is facing charges of sexually abusing a 12-year-old girl on several occasions on Rota.

Camacho vacated the jury trial set for March 13, 2017; instead, he set a bench trial that same day and time in the Rota courthouse.

Assistant attorney general Chester Hinds appeared for the government. Assistant public defender Tillman Clark is counsel for Manglona.

The amended information charged Manglona with sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

The Department of Public Safety Central received a call last Sept. 6 from a Rota school principal about a case of sex abuse of a minor. The girl allegedly told a teacher that Manglona has been sexually abusing her and that she wants it to stop. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

OBSTACLE COURSE IPI/BSI-CSR

The Corporate Social Responsibility team of Imperial Pacific International, Ltd. assisted the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in setting up a mini obstacle course for their "Kids Athletics" project.

Saipan sobriety checkpoints

The Department of Public Safety's Traffic Section will be conducting sobriety checkpoints on Saipan on Saturday, Dec. 31, 2016, on Beach Road, Garapan to Beach Road, Chalan Kanoa, from 6pm to 8pm, and along Chalan Pale Arnold, Garapan to Chalan Pale Arnold, Chalan Lau Lau, from 10pm to 12am.

Each checkpoint will last 75 minutes or 1 hour and 15 minutes. Checkpoints will be terminated when it rains.

Traffic and patrol officers will be actively conducting speed enforcement, aggressive driving interdiction program and will be conducting highway criminal interdiction. ***(DPS)***

NMC student orientation on Jan. 6

The Northern Marianas College will be conducting student orientations for the upcoming spring 2017 semester on Friday, Jan. 6, 2017, for new, readmitted, and international students at two different times: the first session will be from 9am to 12pm and the second session will be from 1pm to 4pm. Both sessions will be held in Building D1 at NMC's As Terlaje campus.

The student orientations are conducted to assist new, re-admitted students, and international students learn more about the registration process, various educational programs, services and resources available at the college.

The student orientations will also provide students the opportunity to meet NMC staff, faculty and other students before the start of the spring semester.

Participation in a student orientation is a requirement for enrollment. New or returning students who do not attend a student orientation will not be able to register for spring 2017 courses.

Students who are absolutely unable to attend an orientation session in person can view the following orientation clips at www.marianas.edu. After watching the videos, students must complete a questionnaire, which they can obtain from testing services at Building I. Students must then submit their completed questionnaire to the Office of Admissions and Records at Building N in order to have their registration hold removed.

Northern Marianas College will also be highlighting its Credit for Prior Learning Program at an info session at 5:30pm on Jan. 5, 2017 (Room D1). Anyone interested in learning more about this program is invited to attend.

For more information about applying to NMC and/or the spring 2017 semester, contact the Office of Admissions & Records at 237-6771/ 6772 or email oar@marianas.edu, or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

PGFC RESULTS

San Vicente Elementary School participated in the 2016 Primary Grade Forensics Competition and the results were the following:

DIVISION: 3-5

RF A-readers forum
4th, Manabat, Keziah
5th, Rasiang, Ku'ara

RF MA-readers forum masters
5th, Agulto, Jonathan

CA RF-Carolinian readers forum
1st, Ramon, Jesner

DUO A-duo performance
2nd, Geronimo, Rihanna
2nd, Dabney, Charianne
4th, Nate, Nolan
4th, Sablan, Tristan

DUO B-duo performance
5th, Mateo,Esabelle
5th, Rasiang, Ku'ara

C SPK-choral speaking group
3rd, Aguon, Kaitlyn
3rd, Dabney, Charianne
3rd, Sanchez, Neveah
3rd, Cepeda, Kyrie
3rd, Geronimo, Rihanna
4th, Teregeyo, Raelani
4th, Manabat, Keziah
4th, Cunanan, Raizel Jena
5th, Manalo, Kyle
5th, Ramon, Jesner
5th, Sablan, Tristan
5th, Nate, Nolan

DIVISION: K-2

Humorous Interpretation A
2nd, Calvo, Angelica Hope
4th, Tolentino, Reese

Readers Forum Masters
4th, Tolentino, Reese

Duo A performance
4th, Pandey, Prashika
4th, Hornejas, Arvin. ***(PR)***

SCS
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SAIPAN COMPUTER SERVICES
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2016 Customer Appreciation Raffle
RAFFLE DATE: JANUARY 3, 2017
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Get a chance to WIN one of these Awesome Prizes!
One (1) Raffle ticket for every $30 Purchase.
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APPLE 27" iMAC Desktop Computer w/ 5K Retina Display
and a lot more..
GoPro HERO 4 Camera
SAMSUNG SM T670 18"Tablet PC
POLAROID Mobile Printer
CYBERPOWER PC Gamer Desktop
Thank you CNMI... on our 30th Anniversary and still... Service Beyond the Sale!

FROM THE STARS TO THE SEA

UOG student hosts special screening

Not all University of Guam sophomore students can claim genius in their ancestry, but Trevor Boykin can trace his back to 1918, the year his paternal great-grandmother Katherine Johnson was born. A mathematician, physicist, and space scientist, Johnson was an integral part of NASA's early space program. Her contributions were vital to the successful launching of astronauts such as Alan Shepard and John Glenn into space. Boykin is ecstatic that his great-grandmother's remarkable life is being featured in the major motion picture, *Hidden Figures*.

Boykin is organizing a special showing of the movie on Saturday, Jan. 7, at 10am in the Micronesia Mall Theaters. He wants to spread the message that anybody, no matter his or her background, can become a scientist and have a successful career. The proceeds from the $10 movie showing will provide a UOG science, technology, engineering, and math student with a scholarship in Johnson's honor.

At 98, Johnson is thrilled to witness the release of a movie about her life. She was born on a farm in West Virginia, and in her small town, the school for African Americans only had classes up to 8th grade. Her teachers noticed her aptitude for mathematics and suggested that her family move with her to a larger town where she could continue her studies. She graduated high school at 14 and at 18 graduated *summa cum laude* from West Virginia State University. She attended graduate school at the University of West Virginia, where she was chosen to be the first African American woman to desegregate the graduate school. Johnson overcame the sexism and racism of the times to become a respected scientist in her field.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Trevor Boykin and his great grandmother, Katherine Johnson.

Boykin remembers visiting his "cool scientist lady" great-grandmother as a child. As a fifth grader Boykin recalls doing a report on his great-grandmother and her work at NASA.

» Proceeds from screening will go toward a STEM scholarship

"At that time, I had no idea what a courageous and important barrier-breaking life she had," he said.

Johnson taught him to play chess, encouraged him to read, go outside, and take an interest in the natural world. Her advice to her great-grandson is simple but profound: "Remember, no one is better than you, and you are no better than anyone." He is carrying on the scientific tradition of his great-grandmother as a biology major at the University of Guam and working as a watershed liaison with UOG Sea Grant. He calls the ocean his second home and marine science is his passion.

Purchase a ticket to the movie showing and make additional donations to the scholarship fund at www.supportuog.org or the UOG College of Natural and Applied Sciences Dean's Office, Room 206 in the Agriculture and Life Sciences Building at UOG. Micronesia Mall Theater doors will open at 9:30am on Jan. 7. Prior to the showing, there will be giveaways and a special introduction by Boykin. Seats are limited. ***(UOG)***

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- **JOB TITLE:** BRICK LAYER
- **NUMBER OF OPENINGS:** 150
- **SALARY RANGE:** $6.55 to $10 /Hourly
- **JOB DUTIES:** Independently lay ceramic tiles and stone materials, obey construction arrangement and consciously complete allocated construction tasks, construct building according to work order without arbitrarily changing construction items and requirements, rapidly construct building with good quality and enough quantity during working time, get raw materials according to list of construction items, economize raw materials and eradicate waste, ensure that residual raw materials are recycled properly and stored into warehouse, ensure that raw materials are cleared after completion for customer satisfaction, pay attention to the safety of construction so as to prevent theft, fire disaster and personal injury, ensure that work ordr and materials order be timely checked and signed.
- **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:** Familiar with dry hanging technology of stone materials; skillfully operate cutting machine, angle grinder and other special machinery for brick laying. Must have at least a few months to 1 year experience.

- **JOB TITLE:** Painter
- **NUMBER OF OPENINGS:** 150
- **SALARY RANGE:** $6.55 to $10 /Hourly
- **JOB DUTIES:** Conscientiously and completely finish assigned tasks with good quality, and full rate if progress, correctly use and protect paint, alcohol, banana oil, and other volatile, inflammable and explosive chemicals; safely operate equipment according to technological operation specification; eradicate fire disaster, poisoning, electrical shock, etc., abide by rules and regulation of the company without violating laws and discipline; lend paint according to requirement of technology ; master the method of roughly estimating the precision of paint, operate air compression pump, exhaust fan, etc.; correctly use and read meters(i.e., barometer, thermometer, etc.)
- **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:** Familiar with the operating skill of spraying paint, must have the ability to read construction drawings, have a good command of kinds of special tools, independently paint putty and complete polish work, do surface latex decoration work, expertly pave and paste wall paper, spray paint wooden surfaces. At least a few months to 1 year of related experience and/or training, or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Must have at least a few months to 1 year of experience.

- **JOB TITLE:** WOODWORKER
- **NUMBER OF OPENINGS:** 300
- **SALARY RANGE:** $6.55 to $10 /Hourly
- **JOB DUTIES:** Responsible for all work about civil engineering in construction site, arrange and elaborately construct the project according to the overall construction planning, follow the command of leader of construction team and timely complete each task assigned solve existing technique problems and quality in construction, arrange working procedures to create safe working conditions, provide written safety technique disclosure to guarantee geometric dimensioning meets drawing requirements, axes shifting must be controlled in permitted scope; deviation of standard height must not exceed norm, cooperate with other workers to well hand over working procedure, consciously abide be rules and regulations of the company, obey the arrangement of superior leaders.
- **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:** Able to read construction drawings, able to skillfully operate kinds of special tools, able to install made-up wood surface, able to independently make light-steel suspension system, wall partition system, soft wall surface, and hard wall surface; comprehensively familiar with design blueprint, master design alteration, and technical disclosure of proprietors. Must have at least a few months to 1 year of experience.

Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting Agenda

Thursday, January 12, 2017
5:00 PM, Zoning Board Conference Room
2nd Fl., Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
Tel: 234-9661 • Fax: 234-9666 • www.zoning.gov.mp

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of 12/01/2016 meeting minutes
   Adoption of 12/09/2016 special meeting minutes
5. Public Comments (not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings)

B. Public Hearings: None
C. Communication
D. Old Business
1. Review of revised Parking Plan as stated in conditions for Conditional Use Permit No. 2016-3079, SunLeader (Saipan) Company, Ltd, dba SunLeader Hotel

C. New Business
1. Office Operations Reports (Permits, Enforcement)

F. Executive (Closed) Session
G. Miscellaneous
a. Other Matters
b. Announcements
c. Next Meeting

H. Adjourn

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Administrator, Therese T. Ogumoro, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

GVB fireworks display to light up Tumon Bay

TUMON, Guam—The Guam Visitors Bureau, along with Matson and United Airlines, present the return of the annual New Year's Eve fireworks show. This signature event will be held at the Gov. Joseph F. Flores Memorial (Ypao Beach) Park on Saturday, Dec. 31, and will include the Tumon Night Market as part of the New Year's Eve "Year of Love" festival from 6pm to midnight.

"Guam has had an amazing year full of record-breaking visitor arrivals and events that have showcased different aspects of our unique Chamorro culture and island hospitality. The New Year's Eve fireworks display is a gift to our residents and visitors for supporting Guam's top industry and to show them how tourism works for all," said Nathan Denight, Guam Visitors Bureau president and CEO. "As we enter the 'Year of Love' in 2017, we encourage everyone to share what they love about our island paradise and invite them to watch fireworks with their loved ones in Tumon Bay."

Live entertainment, food, drinks and family-friendly activities will be featured into the New Year at the Tumon Night Market as part of the celebration. Among the highlighted entertainment is ukulele virtuoso Kris Fuchigami, who will perform two 45-minute sets at 8pm and 11pm. The world-renowned musical artist from Hawaii was nominated for the prestigious Na Hoku Hano Hano Award for the Instrumental Composition of the Year category with his original composition of "Moemoea."

The New Year's Eve fireworks show will last 10 minutes and will be synchronized to a special musical presentation at the stroke of midnight. A fireworks photo contest has also been launched. Participants are encouraged to share their best photos of the New Year's Eve fireworks with #withlovefromguam on social media and upload it to love.visitguam.com for a chance to win a one-night stay for two at the Hilton Guam Resort & Spa.

The New Year's Eve fireworks show is presented by Matson and United Airlines. The GVB signature event is also sponsored by Pacific Islands Club, T Galleria by DFS, Hilton Guam Resort & Spa, Hyatt Regency Guam and Docomo Pacific. GVB thanks Tumon Night Market sponsors Galaide Professional Services Inc. Guam, IT&E, Guam Autospot, Quality Distributors and Guam Premier Outlets. Special thanks is also given to the Guam Police Department, Guam Fire Department, GVB's Visitor Safety Officers, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. ***(GVB)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Glow Walk, Run or Wheel set

The VOICES of the CNMI in collaboration with Team Koka will be having its annual Glow Walk, Run Or Wheel on Dec. 28 starting at 5pm. This will be the fourth year since the Voices has been hosting this event. You still have time to register and the first 100 participants will receive a T-shirt and bag. Contact Jan Barcinas, Monika Diaz or Mikaela Diaz to register. ***(PR)***

Tinian sobriety checkpoints set

Tinian's Traffic Section will be conducting sobriety checkpoints on the dates and time listed below:

■ Dec. 29, 2016, 6pm to 7:15pm: North- and southbound lane on Broadway Road between Tinian Hardware and Natibu Park.

■ Dec. 29, 2016, 8pm to 9:15pm: West- and eastbound lane on Suzuran Street between Natibu Park and Senior Citizen Center in San Jose Village.

■ Dec. 30, 2016, 6:30pm to 7:45pm: West- and eastbound lane on Grand Street between JJ Mart and Department of Commerce.

■ Dec. 30, 2016, 8pm to 9:15pm: West and eastbound lane on Canal Street between Queen's and Tinian Hardware.

Each checkpoint will last at least 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes). ***(DPS)***

NMPASI closed on Dec. 30

The Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc., or NMPASI, will be closed on Friday, Dec. 30, 2016, at 12pm for Professional Development training. It will reopen on Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2017, for normal business hours: 8am-5pm. ***(PR)***

$1,000 for MVA's 'Marianas-*chan*'

In its quest to find its Marianas-*chan* (Marianas child) to help promote the Northern Marianas in Japan, the Marianas Visitors Authority is offering a $1,000 to the winner of auditions on Jan. 7, 2016. Contestants must register before the auditions, and the deadline to register is Dec. 30, 2016.

Interested contestants from Tinian and Rota are invited to submit an application with a 1-2 minute video of the contestant to info@mymarianas.com for call back to the Jan. 7 audition.

For further details, download a Marianas-*chan* application at www.mymarianas.comor call the MVA at 1.670.664.3200/01. ***(MVA)***

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

OPEN COMPETITIVE
EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT

It is the policy of the State Board of Education, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, that the Public School Human Resources System shall be applied and administered according to the principles of equal employment opportunity. Applications shall be evaluated regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability, or national origin.

Applicants for this position must be a U.S. Citizen or be eligible and authorized to work in the U.S., including the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for the Public School System.

POSITION/TITLE: HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR

EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT NO.: **PSS-2016-211 (Re-Announcement)**
OPENING DATE: December 27, 2016 CLOSING DATE: January 10, 2017
SALARY: PAY LEVEL/GRADE: **UNGRADED** STEP(S): **UNGRADED; $50,000 - $70,000** PER ANNUM
BENEFITS: Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays).
LOCATION: **PSS, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Administers effectively the Public School Personnel System Rules and Regulations.
- Develops, evaluates, improves and implements all facets of Personnel System Rules and Regulations.
- Plans, organizes and develops duties and responsibilities consistent with position classifications.
- Assigns positions consistent with the mission of the organization and structures positions for accomplishment of requirements.
- Provides advice and assistance to PSS staff on matters relating to personnel issues.
- Assists the Commissioner of Education in the Administration of the Public School Personnel System Rules and Regulations.
- Oversees the day-to-day operation of the Human Resources Office.
- Plans, manages and supervises all Human Resource functions and monitoring staff development.
- Manages staff and budget of the office. Incorporates the PSS mission and strategic goals and objectives into work.
- Provides input to the PSS strategic planning process with regard to workforce planning, staff development, and human resource records.
- Analyzes institutional human resource and human resource records policies and procedures and recommends appropriate revisions.
- Maintains all personnel records in accordance with PSS policies and applicable state and federal laws.
- Safeguards and maintains confidentiality of all employee records and issues.
- Develops and maintains information systems which support management reporting needs for the institution.
- Provides program directors and other supervisors and staff clarification on human resource policies and procedures.
- Provides director to the institution's employment program (recruitment and hiring orientation)
- Develops and maintains a positive relationship with agencies providing benefits programs, and temporary help as well as appropriate state and federal agencies.
- Provides ongoing support to the Commissioner of Education on human resource and HRIS.
- Remains current on local, state, and federal human resource and HRIS related laws and regulations.
- Develops, maintains, and assists with implementing an Equal Employment Opportunity action plan, staff development plan, including preparation of interim and end-of-year status reports; and, an information systems plan.
- Coordinates and serves as liaison to assigned staff committees of PSS, e.g. Human Resources.
- Collects and maintains data and assists with preparing quarterly and annual reports for Commissioner of Education and for state and federal agencies.
- Collaborates closely with the Fiscal and Budget Office for payroll and budgeting purposes.
- Assists with other tasks as assigned by the Commissioner.

JOB RELATED DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNMENTS:
The statements contained herein describe the scope of the responsibility and essential function of this position, but should not be considered to be the only duties and responsibilities of employee(s). Individuals may perform other duties as assigned including work in other areas to cover absences or relief to equalize peak work periods or otherwise balance the workload. Employee(s) may be requested to supervise and/or train the employees. Employee(s) will be required to follow any other job-related duties requested by any person authorized to give instructions or assignments.

FORTY (40) HOUR WORKWEEK:
The normal work period shall be a seven (7) days work period with a maximum non-overtime of forty (40) hours.
The Public School System (PSS) operates on a 40 hour work week. Actual working hours will be determined on the basis of operational efficiency. School Principals, Supervisors or Program Managers will establish working schedules subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Education.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF THE JOB:
The duties and responsibilities listed herein have excluded the functions of the position that are incidental to the performance of fundamental job duties. All duties and responsibilities listed herein are essential job functions and requirements and are subject to modification to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities. To perform this job successfully, the incumbent(s) will possess the skills, aptitudes, and abilities to perform each duty proficiently. Some positions may exclude individuals who pose a direct threat or significant risk to the health or safety of themselves or others. The qualification requirements listed in this document are the minimum levels of knowledge, abilities and skills required to perform this position.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:
- Graduation from a U.S. accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in human resource management, personnel administration, or related field plus six (6) years work related experience OR Graduation with a Master's degree plus four (4) years work related experience.
- State Professional Human Resource certified (SPHR) desired.
- Must have a broad knowledge of human resource theory and practice.
- Must have experience in working in a human resource office of an educational organization.

CONDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
This position is considered "EXEMPT STATUS": Is not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time and is paid on a salary basis pursuant to Regulations for PSS Employment of Non-Certified Personnel and Fair Labor Standards Act.

POSITION/TITLE: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE (Re-Announcement)

EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT NO: **PSS-2016-212**
OPENING DATE: December 22, 2016 CLOSING DATE: January 05, 2017
SALARY: PAY LEVEL: **UNGRADED** STEP(S): **UNGRADED; $50,000.00 - $70,000.00** PER ANNUM
BENEFITS: Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays).
LOCATION: **PSS, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:
- The applicant for this position shall report directly to the Commissioner of Education.
- Plans, formulates and recommends financial policies, standards, techniques, and directives relative to the overall financial activities of the Public School System.
- Creates an interactive budgeting process so that key financial management centers, such as Legislatures, Department of Finance, OPA, and independent auditor, are linked under a unified checks and balances on public funds matters.
- Consults with and advises the members of the Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, the School Principals and the Program Managers on all matters relating to financial and budget issues.
- Collaborates with the Federal Programs Office, the Human Resources Office and the Procurement & Supply Office on all financial budget status.
- Advocates a positive relationship with members of the Legislature (both House & Senate) to assure conditional support on legislative issues affecting the Public School System, in particular the annual budget processes.
- Works with and maintains cooperative relationship with the CNMI Government/Executive Branch, in particular the Governor's Special Assistant on Management and Budget, the CNMI Department of Finance and cognizant government agencies involved with financial & budget matters, technical assistance support for computer services, gathering of pertinent information or related specialized functions.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.
- Organizes, Controls, Supervises and directs the overall financial requirements of the Public School System.
- Supervises Personnel of the Fiscal & Budget Office.
- Manages the operation of the Finance & Budget Office and the computerized financial management system.
- Schedules the monthly and annual financial reports and comparative analysis reports.
- Recommends and implements the creation of customized financial reports.
- Delegates agency representation for the annual single audits and all other Public School Systems audits.
- Systematizes the program development for the facilitation and coordination of the financial activities of the Public School Systems.
- Drafts and submits sustainable annual budget request for the Public School System.
- Insures that all monies due to the Public School System are collected and deposited in a timely manner to appropriate bank accounts:
  a. CIP funding are collected and deposited in a timely manner.
  b. All federal grants are properly billed and drawdown, and deposited accordingly.
  c. All local funds appropriated by the CNMI Legislature are allotted and cash transfers are transmitted from the CNMI Treasury to PSS accounts.
  d. All claims against the PSS are closely scrutinized to assure validity and propriety of settlements.

JOB RELATED DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNMENTS:
The statements contained herein describe the scope of the responsibility and essential function of this position, but should not be considered to be the only duties and responsibilities of employee(s). Individuals may perform other duties as assigned including work in other areas to cover absences or relief to equalize peak work periods or otherwise balance the workload. Employee(s) may be requested to supervise and/or train the employees. Employee(s) will be required to follow any other job-related duties requested by any person authorized to give instructions or assignments.

FORTY (40) HOUR WORK WEEK:
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PHYSICAL DEMANDS:
Exerting up to twenty (20) pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently.

JOB REQUIREMENTS:
This position may require the applicant to perform some travel, evening and weekend works.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:
Graduation from a U.S. accredited college or university with a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration, Finance, Accounting, or related field of study, plus five (5) years work experience and can either hold a valid licensure as a Certified Public Accountant; OR MA degree in Business Administration, Finance and Accounting or related field of study, plus five (5) years related work experience, including three (3) years in Public Auditing or Government Auditing.

Applicants must also have knowledge and experience in the following areas:
- In-depth knowledge of Generally Accepted Accounting Principals, including governmental accounting, budgetary, and cost accounting.
- Knowledge in school finance.
- Knowledge of the CNMI laws and regulations including laws and regulation relating to governmental finance, administration, and personnel.
- Knowledge of budget and accounting requirements relating to federal education programs.
- Knowledge of JDE/IBM computer applications.
- Ability to communicate and build consensus with and among stakeholders, including legislature, central and school level management, staff, representatives of other CNMI agencies.
- Experience in working with short and long range planning.
- Experience in working with CNMI and federal legislative entities.
- Experience in working with policy setting bodies.
- Experience in working with government or public auditing.

Preferred a candidate holding a CPA designation issued by any State of the United States, its territory or possession.

CONDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
This position is considered "EXEMPT STATUS": Is not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time and is paid on a salary basis pursuant to Regulations for PSS Employment of Non-Certified Personnel and Fair Labor Standards Act.

POSITION/TITLE: EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START DIRECTOR

EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT NO.: **PSS-2016-218**
OPENING DATE: December 15, 2016 CLOSING DATE: December 29, 2016
SALARY: PAY LEVEL/GRADE: **UNGRADED** STEP(S): **UNGRADED; $55,000 - $65,000** PER ANNUM
BENEFITS: Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays).
LOCATION: **PSS, EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START PROGRAM**

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Plans, coordinates and directs the overall Early Head Start/Head Start Program operations and activities by formulating policies, and objectives in conjunction with established Head Start Performance Standards and Administration for Children and Families.
- Supervise the selection, placement and evaluation of Early Head Start/Head Start Program staff.
- Plans and develops activities of programs service area in conjunction with the Early Head Start Assistant Director, service area managers and Site Coordinators.
- Supervises, reviews, and evaluates the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of program activities for continuous program improvement towards the attainment of goals.
- Interprets Head Start Performance Standards, Administration for Children and Families, Early Head Start/Head Start Policies and Procedures and Board of Education guidelines and policies and other Federal laws that apply.
- Administers the policies and guidelines as required.
- Implements the policies and regulations through delegation to appropriate staff. Acts as an advisor to the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council in areas needing policy development and revision.
- Assists in formulating policies by providing the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council with necessary data and information.
- Recommends improvements in legislation and interprets regulations affecting Early Head Start/Head Start.
- Submits periodic reports and data as requested regarding the Early Head Start/Head Start Program to the immediate supervisor and the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council, Administration for Children and Families and the Board of Education (Grantee Agency).
- Keeps the community informed regarding the needs and accomplishments/progress of the Early Head Start/Head Start program.
- Provides the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council and the immediate supervisor with analysis and evaluation of communication with members of the community relative to their concerns for the goals, philosophy and effectiveness for the Early Head Start/Head Start Program.
- Assists in recruitment, termination, and retainment of Early Head Start/Head Start personnel with approval of the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council.
- Provides through personal participation or the assignment of staff members, specialized technical assistance such as instructional development, in-service for teacher training and other similar areas to the staff for the improvement of services for the Early Head Start/Head Start children.
- Approve or disapprove leave requests for Early Head Start/Head Start staff.
- Develops and submits annual Early Head Start/Head Start plan of action for the administration and implementation of the program service areas to the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council and immediate supervisor.
- Conducts an annual community assessment for the Early Head Start/Head Start Program in the CNMI to determine short term and long term goals and plans. Conducts an annual self-assessment of the Early Head Start/Head Start program.
- Keeps abreast with all current CNMI and Federal laws and their applicability to the Early Head Start/Head Start program.
- Represents the Early Head Start/Head Start program at meetings and conferences as it pertains to Early Head Start/Head Start.
- Responds to official inquires and issue position papers on Early Head Start/Head Start affairs as concurred by immediate supervisors and the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council.
- Oversees the daily operation of each Early Head Start/Head Start centers. Monitors the implementation of the Early Education and Health Services, Family and Community Partnership and Program Design and Management.
- Prepares the Early Head Start/Head Start Program budget in coordination with the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council and immediate supervisor.
- Conducts workshops, technical assistance and on-site reviews.
- Prepares accountability reports of program service area including special programs and projects as appropriate.
- Supervises the process of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation.
- Prepares reports and statistics regarding program activities.
- Supervise, evaluate and support teachers and staff.
- Communicate expectations and direction of the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council, the Board of Education and the Public School System.
- Help centers meet legal and policy-requirements.
- Provide emergency support to centers. Assists the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council and Board of Education in the formulation and implementation of operational policies.
- Coordinates with program specialists on issues concerning program service area.
- Plans and conducts Health Symposium, Reading and Family Literacy Conferences, and other educational meetings for Early Head Start/Head Start Program teachers, staff and parents and volunteers.
- Reviews program plans for consistency with the Head Start Performance Standards and Board of Education goals and objectives.
- Keeps abreast of new educational developments in early education, and provides leadership and direction to the Public School System.
- Keeps abreast with Early Head Start/Head Start philosophy and the ability to implement its principle of shared decision-making.
- Performs other related functions requested by authorized personnel to give instructions or assignments.

JOB DESCRIPTION:
- Consults with the Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council, and is under the supervision of the Associate Commissioner for Student Support Services
- Provides leadership, guidance, technical assistance, and support to the Early Head Start/Head Start Program to enhance and improve educational programs, ensure conformance with Head Start Performance Standards, State Board of Education rules, policies and procedures and rules and regulations as mandated by the Federal government as it affects Early Head Start/ Head Start Program.
- Works within general methods and procedures and exercises considerable judgment to adapt and apply guidelines and policies to specific situations in regards to the Head Start Performance Standards focused on the delivery of services in Early Education and Health Services, Family and Community Partnership and Program Design and Management.
- Directs and supervises the activities of the Early Head Start Assistant Director, service areas managers, site coordinators, Administrative Officer, Administrative Specialist, other admin office staff, Family Partnership Advocates and teachers of the Early Head Start/Head Start Program.
- Ensure continuous program improvement in program design and management and all service areas in the effort to meet school readiness goals for children and families.

JOB RELATED DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNMENTS:
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QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:
- Graduation from a U.S. accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education/Preschool or related field, plus six (6) years education administration work related experience and two (2) years teaching experience.
- PRAXIS I & II

CONDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
This position is considered "EXEMPT STATUS": Is not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time and is paid on a salary basis pursuant to Regulations for PSS Employment of Non-Certified Personnel and Fair Labor Standards Act.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS: INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN AND SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS TO THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT CAPITOL HILL BUILDING #1202. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE, (2) TRANSCRIPTS, (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX MONTHS), (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER, (5) RESUME, AND (6) TEACHING CERTIFICATE (IF APPLICABLE). COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, CAPITOL HILL BUILDING #1202, P.O. BOX 501370CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, TEL. NOS. (670) 664-3825. YOUR APPLICATION FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE ON OR BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE OF THE POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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PICK YOUR OUTRAGES CAREFULLY SO YOUR HEAD DOESN'T EXPLODE EVERY FIVE MINUTES.
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EDITORIAL

Social media mourning also a chance to discover a new artist

LUCASFILM/TNS

In a scene from the 1980 film "The Empire Strikes Back", Carrie Fisher speaks with director Irvin Kershner during the carbon freezing scene.

With news of the death Tuesday of "Star Wars" actress Carrie Fisher, there truly was a disturbance in the force—to borrow a key phrase from that film. By which we mean there was a global outpouring of affection and mourning via social media from Fisher's many fans.

Did you notice? Thousands of people were saying goodbye on Facebook and Twitter, almost in unison.

In "Star Wars," Fisher was the bravely determined Princess Leia. As a writer, she was fearlessly honest about her struggles with addiction and bipolar disorder. Her death at 60 is sad, but there was solace and inspiration in the online reflections and appreciations by people she touched:

"Carrie Fisher taught every little girl that they don't have to be a damsel in distress. She redefined the idea of a princess," one woman wrote on Twitter a few minutes after Fisher's death was announced.

"Carrie Fisher not just a great actor and writer—but abrasively honest re mental illness & addiction—topics still shameful esp for women," another wrote.

A portion of the digital reaction focused on the timing: Another unique talent has died? Fie on you, 2016. George Michael, the soulful British singer, departed on Christmas Day. The year also took Muhammad Ali, iconic musicians David Bowie, Prince and Leonard Cohen, entertainers Gene Wilder, Garry Shandling and Garry Marshall, writer Harper Lee and many more famous and infamous figures.

Did 2016 have something nefarious up its sleeve? Of course not. Death is not just inevitable, it's unpredictable. What did seem more noticeable this year, especially compared to the era before social media, is the impact of notable deaths on people all over the country, and the world, because they could share their thoughts and grief instantaneously via smartphone, tablet or computer. Where once you might have read a newspaper obituary, learned of a colleague's favorite songwriter or performer at the water cooler or missed out completely, this year you could see and read the tributes by friends and others unfurl in real-

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What are the 10 most historic events in your lifetime?

By DICK MEYER
Scripps Washington Bureau

Dick Meyer is Chief Washington Correspondent for the Scripps Washington Bureau and DecodeDC (www.newsnet5.com/decodedc). Readers may send him email at dick.meyer@scripps.com

The transition from Barack Obama to Donald Trump certainly feels like a historic moment, historically awful for some and positive for others. If it is any comfort, an interesting new study suggests that Americans have more in common in how they view the past than the present.

The Pew Research Center and A+E Network's "HISTORY" teamed up to ask more than 2,000 Americans this question: "Please name the 10 historic events that occurred in your lifetime that have had the greatest impact on the country." They sorted the results by generation because, obviously, different generations lived through different events.

The big headline was that Americans of all generations named the attacks of September 11, 2001, as the most important event of their lifetime by far. This was true even of older people who lived through World War II and the Vietnam War. There wasn't much variation by age, gender, region or political leanings. African-Americans did put Obama's election at the top.

Historians certainly could marshal many arguments that 9/11 was not, in fact, the most consequential episode in history for the Silent Generation (born 1928 to 1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964). But something about 9/11 puts it at the top of historical memories for all generations.

Nothing else comes close. The only other events listed by all generations were the election of Obama and the "tech revolution."

This is the top 10 list for Millennials (1981 to 1998):

- 9/11
- Obama election
- Iraq/Afghanistan wars
- Gay marriage
- The tech revolution
- Orlando shooting
- Hurricane Katrina
- Columbine shooting
- Death of Bin Laden
- Sandy Hook

It's a sad list for the most part. Millennials tend to see Obama's election and gay marriage as positive historic moments; the tech revolution, for sure. It is especially disturbing, though not at all surprising, to see three mass shootings so prominent in the historical memory of young people.

Generation X (1965 to 1980) produced a similar list but they remember "the Fall of Berlin Wall/end of Cold War" and rank it third, according to the poll. Here's the Gen X top 10:

1 9/11
2 Obama election
3 Fall of Berlin Wall/end of Cold War
4 The tech revolution
5 Iraq/Afghanistan wars
6 Gulf War
7 Challenger disaster
8 Gay marriage
9 Hurricane Katrina
10 Columbine shooting

There's a big jump, obviously, to the Baby Boomer list:

- 9/11
- JFK assassination
- Vietnam War
- Obama election
- Moon landing
- The tech revolution
- Civil Rights movement
- Fall of Berlin Wall/end of Cold War
- MLK assassination
- Iraq/Afghanistan wars

I'm a boomer whether I like it or not, and I would put Vietnam on the top of my list, no doubt. And I would have ranked the civil rights movement second—as both a triumph and a tragedy. I would have put Watergate on my list and perhaps the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1967 and 1973. I hope I don't have to add Donald Trump's election to my list in 10 years.

Finally, here is the list of the Silent Generation:

- 9/11
- WWII
- JFK assassination
- Vietnam War
- Moon landing
- Obama election
- The tech revolution
- Civil rights movement
- Korean War
- Iraq/Afghanistan wars

I find it surprising that the civil rights movement wasn't higher on the list and even more surprising that the Cold War—or the

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EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

10 things you can do to avoid fraud

CONSUMER CAUTION CORNER

By MICHAEL J. CYGANEK
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

This week, the Office of the Attorney General's "Consumer Caution Corner" sets out 10 things you can do to avoid fraud:

1 **Spot imposters.** Scammers often pretend to be someone you trust, like a government official, a family member, a charity, or a company you do business with. Do not send money or give out personal information in response to an unexpected request—whether it comes as a text, a phone call, or an email.

2 **Do online searches.** Type a company or product name into your favorite search engine with words like "review," "complaint" or "scam." Or search for a phrase that describes your situation, like "IRS call."

3 **Do NOT believe your caller ID.** Technology makes it easy for scammers to fake caller ID information, so the name and number you see are not always real. If someone calls asking for money or personal information, hang up. If you think the caller might be telling the truth, call back to a number you know is genuine.

4 **Do NOT pay upfront for a promise.** Someone might ask you to pay in advance for things like debt relief, credit and loan offers, mortgage assistance, or a job. They might even say you've won a prize, but first you have to pay taxes or fees. If you do, they will probably take the money and disappear.

5 **Consider how you pay.** Government offices and honest companies won't require you to use payment methods, such as Western Union or MoneyGram.

6 **Talk to someone.** Before you give up your money or personal information, talk to someone you trust. Con artists want you to make decisions in a hurry. They might even threaten you. Slow down, check out the story, do an online search, consult an expert—or just tell a friend.

7 **Hang up on robocalls.** If you answer the phone and hear a recorded sales pitch, hang up and report it to the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov. These calls are illegal, and often the products are bogus.

8 **Be skeptical about free trial offers.** Some companies use free trials to sign you up for products and bill you every month until you cancel. Before you agree to a free trial, research the company and read the cancellation policy. And always review your monthly statements for charges you don't recognize.

9 **Do NOT deposit a check and wire money back.** By law, banks must make funds from deposited checks available within days, but uncovering a fake check can take weeks. If a check you deposit turns out to be a fake, you are responsible for repaying the bank.

10 **Sign up for free scam alerts** from the FTC at ftc.gov/scams. The FTC aids in providing these materials.

Each week, the OAG's Consumer Protection Education Program (a.k.a. "The Consumer Caution Corner") aims to provide consumers and businesses with the "know-how" to identify and protect themselves from unfair trade practices and marketplace schemes. If you would like to file a consumer complaint, please pick up a Form at the OAG (on Capital Hill) and then submit it by email to consumer_counsel@cnmioag.org.

Michael J. Cyganek is the consumer counsel at the Office of the Attorney General.

Trump, 'Merry Christmas' and a Happy New Year

By JOHN M. CRISP
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

I tried to write a Christmas column without mentioning president-elect Donald Trump; as you can see, I have failed.

You may have preferred not to think about Trump during the season that celebrates the birth of the man who said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Jesus must have been scratching his head on Nov. 8.

But Jesus can afford to take the long view, and maybe eventually he'll be right. But for the rest of us, Trump's outsized personality tends to suck the mistletoe out of the room.

Trump's chief Christmas message bears some consideration: Earlier this month, he promised to make the nation safe for saying "Merry Christmas."

"So when I started 18 months ago," Trump said. "I told my first crowd in Wisconsin that we are going to come back here someday and we are going to say 'Merry Christmas' again. Merry Christmas. So, Merry Christmas everyone." Take that!

But the notion that the term "Merry Christmas" has been suppressed by secularists as a tactic in a larger "War on Christmas" has never held up very well to scrutiny. It derives from two initiatives, both of them commendable:

The first involves the question of why our government should spend taxpayers' money to fund public expressions of religious faith at courthouses and schools or, more to the point, why it should privilege any particular religion over others or none at all in an increasingly diverse culture.

The second initiative involves private businesses that began to realize that not every customer who walks through their doors is a Christian and to recognize that the assumption that every Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or atheist is celebrating Christmas might begin to grate after a while. So they began to substitute "Happy Holidays" or "Season's Greetings" in a decent and generous effort to acknowledge the feelings of individuals.

The idea that Merry Christmas has been the victim of an organized attempt to purge it from our language, along with our Judeo-Christian heritage, is all in all fairly ridiculous.

And it's certainly not supported by an MSNBC videotape referenced by E.J. Dionne in a Washington Post column last week: It shows President Obama—whose Christianity many on the right still question—saying "Merry Christmas" some 20 times in different contexts, including during the lighting of the White House Christmas tree.

No outrage ensued, no consternation and no investigations by the political correctness police.

Still, Trump got a lot of political mileage out of making people fear that their religious liberties are threatened, thereby taking advantage of three of religion's least desirable characteristics: tribalism, grievance and aggression.

At its best religion promotes tolerance and inclusion, and maybe we're getting better at them. But unfortunately, more often than not, religion still provides the principles by which we divide ourselves into groups. Few other human elements generate as much capacity to take offense. And few stoke the depth of passion that can make people willing to fight and even die for what they see as a greater cause.

Trump was able to capitalize on our inherent inclination to feel grievance and our need to defend ourselves from others. His use of religion in this way is somewhat ironic since no one would mistake him for a conventionally devout person. He's clearly profane, lewd and materialistic, he stumbles when he tries to name his favorite scripture and he mispronounces books of the Bible that are completely familiar to any semi-serious adolescent Sunday school student.

He's the opposite of humble, and it's impossible to imagine him loving his enemies or turning the other cheek. Of course, it's not our place to judge anyone else's religiosity. After all, Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." But Jesus also said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," which in Trump's case are rather bitter.

So Trump is an odd advocate for us to choose to defend our unchallenged right to say "Merry Christmas." But I say it to you, nevertheless, along with Happy Holidays and Season's Greetings. And a Happy New Year.

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, teaches in the English Department at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas. Readers may send him email at jcrisp@delmar.edu.

SOCIAL

From Page 10

time on Facebook or other sites.

Call it the collective public eulogy.

If you never saw "Star Wars" or read Carrie Fisher's semi-autobiographical novel "Postcards from the Edge," she probably meant little to you. But a few minutes scrolling the web on Tuesday brought you smack-dab into a deeply moving, virtual memorial service. Fisher, it turns out, wasn't just an iconic actress and the daughter of Hollywood legends Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher, she was a role model for would-be princesses everywhere, an imperfect soul and hilarious observer of the human condition. There was a lot to love about Carrie Fisher, and that's what you saw in the Twitterverse.

This phenomenon played out frequently in 2016 the wake of each breaking news headline about a celebrity death. Fans shared their lists of favorite Bowie songs and passages from Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird." They mourned the loss of actor Alan Rickman and his Professor Snape character from the Harry Potter series. They posted Leonard Cohen concert footage and George Michael videos in tribute. And they thanked the artists for their gifts.

Besides acting as a catharsis, the collective eulogy serves a valuable secondary purpose. When the public inundates social media with praise and goodbyes for an influential public figure, it provides a giant hint that this person was important. It's a belated introduction to a new audience. If your Facebook feed lights up over a death, that's an unexpected opportunity to explore an author or musician or historical figure you didn't know. Consider taking advantage of the invitation. Bowie truly was a visionary. Fisher was an inspiration. You can trust the wisdom of the crowd.

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LIFETIME

From Page 10

end of it—didn't make the list at all.

More of the items on the Millennials and Generation X lists were very time-limited, headline "news events" that saturated TV for a period: 9/11, Orlando, Hurricane Katrina, Columbine, Bin Laden's execution, Sandy Hook and the Challenger. This might be a function of age, but it also could involve how the news media and our consumption of it have changed.

It is also interesting to see that as the world has grown small and more connected, global events aren't more prominent on young people's historical radars. The war on terrorism, the Arab Spring or the drug wars didn't make any lists.

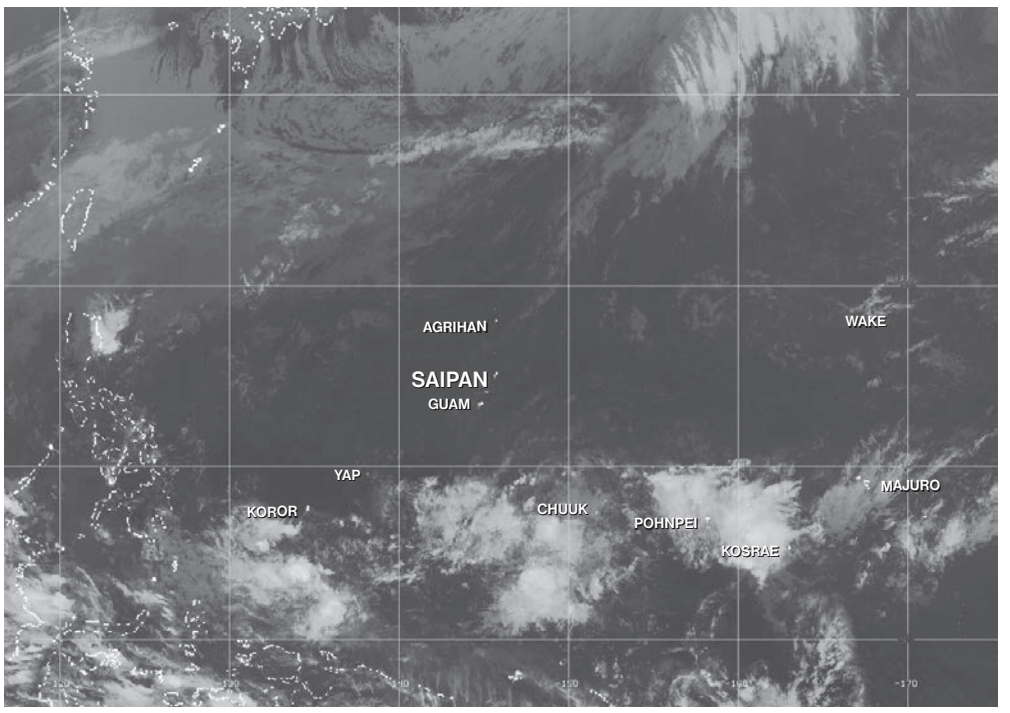
Mostly what struck me was how similar perceptions of historical events were across generations and our other demographic dividing lines. Obviously, all Americans don't view these events the same way. But after a year like 2016 and an election like this one, I'm inclined to start the New Year looking for as much common ground as I can.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲89° ▼79°	▲89° ▼79°	▲89° ▼79°	▲89° ▼79°	▲89° ▼79°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:40 AM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2016
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Latest WSR-88D data shows a few light showers across the Marianas this morning. Partly cloudy skies with moderate to fresh trade winds prevail across the region.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▼ ▲
Guam and Rota	Partly cloudy	79 / 87 °F
Palau	Sunny	80 / 89 °F
Yap	Partly cloudy	80 / 85 °F
Chuuk	Heavy rain	80 / 86 °F
Pohnpei	Heavy rain	76 / 84 °F
Kosrae	Mostly cloudy	80 / 85 °F
Majuro	Mostly cloudy	80 / 83 °F

AROUND THE GLOBE		▼ ▲
Auckland	Afternoon clouds	58 / 65 °F
Beijing	Morning clouds	10 / 33 °F
Hong Kong	Afternoon clouds	55 / 59 °F
Honolulu	Partly sunny	70 / 77 °F
London	High level clouds	34 / 46 °F
Los Angeles	Mostly sunny	53 / 76 °F
Manila	Morning clouds	78 / 90 °F
Melbourne	Mostly cloudy	69 / 83 °F
Miami	Morning clouds	69 / 81 °F
New York	Increasing cloudiness	33 / 40 °F
Osaka	Mostly sunny	31 / 50 °F
Paris	High level clouds	32 / 44 °F
Pusan	Sunny	33 / 41 °F
Rome	Sunny	33 / 52 °F
Salem	High level clouds	32 / 45 °F
San Francisco	Mostly sunny	46 / 60 °F
Seoul	Partly cloudy	15 / 28 °F
Tokyo	Partly cloudy	33 / 50 °F
Washington, DC	Partly cloudy	38 / 50 °F

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- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		
1:47 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.27 Feet
8:41 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.85 Feet
2:10 PM	LOW TIDE	1.13 Feet
7:01 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.87 Feet

	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	5:57 PM
Sunday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Monday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM

	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:19 AM	5:58 PM	-
Friday	7:08 AM	6:49 PM	-
Saturday	7:57 AM	7:41 PM	-
Sunday	8:44 AM	8:33 PM	-
Monday	9:30 AM	9:26 PM	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 5, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:00pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
LJ652	2:10pm	6:05pm	Daily
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	8:55am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:15am	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
PR1572	5:45am	7:45am	7, 4
UA6391/183	1:30pm	8:50pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/183	1:30pm	9:10pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/193	1:30pm	10:35pm	5 via Rota-GUM-ROR
UA6390/183	2:20pm	8:50pm	2 via GUM
UA6390/183	2:20pm	9:10pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA6390/193	2:20pm	10:35pm	2 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	2:00am	5:00am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:20am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6391/159	1:30pm	9:55pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA6390/159	2:20pm	9:55pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

LJ651	7:30am	1:10pm	Daily
7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ625	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:05pm	1:55am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR1571	10:25pm	4:45am+1	3, 6
UA192/6395	9:45pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/6395	10:25pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/6395	11:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 7
UA116/6395	9:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju Air; HX: Hong Kong Airlines; LJ: Jin Air; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure;ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

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TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Analysis: GOP vexed by factions on replacing health law

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republicans are united on repealing President Barack Obama's health care law, but ideologically and practically speaking, they're in different camps over replacing it. Getting the factions together won't be easy.

Some Republicans would revise and rebrand "Obamacare," junking unpopular provisions like its requirement that most Americans carry health insurance, while preserving more popular provisions. Others would rip up the Affordable Care Act, or ACA, and not replace it.

President-elect Donald Trump and Republican congressional leaders will have to unite the groups on complicated changes affecting the financial and physical well-being of millions of people. For some constituents in fragile health, it's literally a life-and-death debate.

Republicans have "a really narrow path," says Grace-Marie Turner of the Galen Institute, a free-market health care research organization. "They've got to deal with the politics of this, they've got to make sure they come up with good policy, and they also have process challenges."

Success is not guaranteed, and Republicans may come to regret that their party defined itself as totally opposed to "Obamacare."

Yet House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady seems unfazed by the challenge. "It's like tax reform," the Texas Republican says, explaining that many pieces will be pulled together. "Unlike Obamacare, which ripped up the individual market, this will be done deliberately, in an appropriate timetable."

Republicans say they will move quickly to repeal the ACA, while suspending the effective date to allow them to craft a replacement. Here's a look at the GOP camps and who's in them:

AP

In this Dec. 6, 2016, file photo, Senate Majority Whip Sen. John Cornyn, of Texas, speaks to the media after the Republican policy luncheon on Capitol Hill in Washington.

REVISE & REBRAND

Many Republicans may quietly be in this contingent, but fear being accused of promoting "Obamacare-lite."

They'd strip out some of the ACA's taxes and requirements. The unpopular "individual mandate" to carry health insurance or risk fines could be replaced with other persuasion short of a government dictate. Rules on insurers would be loosened.

But popular provisions such as protecting those with pre-existing health conditions would be retained in some form, as well as financial assistance for low- and moderate-income people. The requirement that health plans cover adult children until age 26 would be fairly easy to preserve, since employers have accommodated it.

A rebranded version of Obama's law may well cover fewer people. But its GOP advocates believe most Americans will find their goal of "universal access" politically acceptable when measured against the Democratic ideal of "universal coverage" underwritten by government.

Many GOP allies in the business community favor revising the ACA. That includes major players among hospitals, insurers and pharmaceuticals.

Trump may have given this group some cover by saying that he wants to keep parts of the law, but his bottom line remains unknown.

BUDGET HAWKS

For budget hawks, unwinding the Obama health law is a beginning. Next they could move on to much bigger objectives like restructuring Medicaid and Medicare, and placing a cost-conscious limit on tax breaks for employer coverage.

Budget hawks see health care as the main driver of government deficits, and they are loath to address that imbalance by raising taxes. Instead they want to rewrite the social compact so individuals accept more responsibility and risk for their health care.

House Speaker Paul Ryan is the most prominent member of this camp, and his "Better Way" agenda is its roadmap. Georgia Rep. Tom Price, Trump's nominee to run the Department of Health and Human Services, is a budget hawk. Vice President-elect Mike Pence has been in the same orbit throughout his career.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Island of misfit toys, UPS expects 1.3M returns in one day

WASHINGTON (AP)—Christmas is the season of giving, and January the month of returns. UPS expects to deliver 1.3 million packages back to retailers on Jan. 5, celebrated by the delivery service, but no one else, as "National Returns Day." Surging online sales have been followed by a surge of returns by air and if UPS is right, it will be its busiest returns day ever, topping last year's 1 million. By the end of January's first week, the Atlanta company said Tuesday that it will likely have returned 5.8 million packages, topping last year's 5 million, which was also a record. A survey by the National Retail Federation estimated that more than $260 billion worth of merchandise was returned 2015.

Feds say 3 hacked law firms' networks, made insider trades

NEW YORK (AP)—Federal prosecutors have charged three Chinese nationals accused of profiting from insider information about mergers and acquisitions by hacking into the networks of law firms working on the deals, authorities said Tuesday. The three men made more than $4 million in profits by buying stock in companies that were about to be acquired and then selling the shares after the acquisitions were announced, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said. Prosecutors say the trio got the insider information between April 2014 and late 2015 by hacking into the email systems of multiple international law firms with offices in New York. One defendant, Iat Hong, was arrested Monday in Hong Kong and is awaiting extradition. Two others, Bo Zheng and Chin Hung, have not been arrested. All three are being charged with multiple securities fraud, insider trading, computer intrusion and other offenses. They face up to 20 years in prison if convicted of the most serious charges.

Growing number of Americans are retiring outside the US

By MARIA ZAMUDIO
FOR THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Newly widowed, Kay McCowen quit her job, sold her house, applied for Social Security and retired to Mexico. It was a move she and her husband, Mel, had discussed before he passed away in 2012.

"I wanted to find a place where I could afford to live off my Social Security," she said. "The weather here is so perfect, and it's a beautiful place."

She is among a growing number of Americans who are retiring outside the United States. The number grew 17 percent between 2010 and 2015 and is expected to increase over the next 10 years as more baby boomers retire.

Just under 400,000 American retirees are now living abroad, according to the Social Security Administration. The countries they have chosen most often: Canada, Japan, Mexico, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Retirees most often cite the cost of living as the reason for moving elsewhere said Olivia S. Mitchell, director of the Pension Research Council at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

"I think that many people retire when they are in good health and they are interested in stretching their dollars and seeing the world," Mitchell said.

McCowen's rent in Ajijic, a community outside Guadalajara near Mexico's Lake Chapala, is half of what she was paying in Texas. And since the weather is moderate, utility bills are inexpensive.

In some countries, Mitchell said, retirees also may find it less expensive to hire someone to do their laundry, clean, cook and even provide long-term care than in the United States.

McCowen has a community of other American retirees nearby and has adjusted well.

But for others there are hurdles to overcome to adjust to life in a different country.

US consumer confidence climbed to 15-year high in December

WASHINGTON (AP)—American consumers are the sunniest they've been in more than 15 years.

The Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index climbed to 113.7 in December, up from 109.4 in November and the highest since it reached 114 in August 2001. It's another sign consumers are confident in the aftermath of a divisive election campaign.

The index measures consumers' assessment of current conditions, which dipped from November but was still very positive, and their expectations for the future, which hit a 13-year high.

Lynn Franco, director of economic indicators at the Conference Board, said the "post-election surge in optimism" was strongest among older Americans.

The U.S. economy grew at a 3.5 percent annual pace from July to September, fastest in two years. Unemployment is at a nine-year low of 4.6 percent. Employers have added 180,000 jobs a month this year, down from an average 229,000 in 2015 but still solid.

Economists monitor consumers' mood closely because their spending accounts for about 70 percent of U.S. economic output.

"The election of Donald Trump has raised household expectations for the economy to a very high level," Stephen Stanley, chief economist at Amherst Pierpont Securities, wrote in a research note. "It remains to be seen whether Trump can deliver," but the burst in confidence could drive consumer spending higher.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
19,945.04	2,268.88	5,487.44
+11.23	+5.09	+24.75
0.06%	0.22%	0.45%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.3866	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7574	Russian Ruble	60.567
British Pound	0.8134	Indian Rupee	68.233	Singapore Dollar	1.45
Canadian Dollar	1.3568	Japanese Yen	117.55	South Korean Won	1206.94
Chinese Yuan	6.9337	Malaysian Ringgit	4.4835	Swiss Franc	1.0268
Euro	0.9544	New Zealand Dollar	1.4446	Taiwan Dollar	32.316
		Philippine Peso	49.76	Thailand Baht	36

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Nation

Trump signals shift from Obama's focus on multilateralism

By JULIE PACE
AP WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

For eight years, President Barack Obama's foreign policy doctrine has been rooted in a belief that while the United States can take action around the world on its own, it rarely should.

"Multilateralism regulates hubris," Obama declared.

His successor, President-elect Donald Trump, has derided some of the same international partnerships Obama and his recent predecessors have promoted, raising the prospect that the Republican's "America First" agenda might well mean an America more willing to act alone.

"The United Nations has such great potential but right now it is just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time," Trump tweeted days after the UN Security Council approved a resolution condemning Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Both Israel and Trump called on the U.S. to use its veto power to block the measure, but the Obama administration instead abstained.

Trump's criticism of the United Nations is shared by some in his party, including a handful of GOP lawmakers who have called for Congress to withhold funding for the body following the settlements vote.

Some of Trump's other positions have drawn swift rebuke from Republicans, particularly his criticism of NATO during the presidential campaign and his suggestion that the U.S. might not defend partners that don't fulfill financial obligations to the longstanding U.S.-European military alliance.

Trump has also challenged the necessity of multilateralism in his economic agenda, pledging to scrap the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade accord in favor of one-on-one agreements that he says will be more favorable to U.S. businesses and workers.

With Trump still about three weeks away from taking office, it's unclear how his campaign rhetoric will translate into action. Even as he has criticized the UN and NATO, he has vowed to "aggressively pursue joint and coalition military operations" with allies to take on the Islamic State militant group. What those military operations might entail is uncertain, given that Trump's views on national security have been both isolationist and muscular, including his recent call for expanding U.S. nuclear capabilities.

Richard Grenell, who served as U.S. spokesman at the United Nations during President George W. Bush's administration and has been working with Trump's transition team, downplayed the prospect that Trump will withdraw from or even disregard the UN and NATO once he takes office.

"Trump is talking about reforming these organizations so that they live up to their ideals, not about abandoning them," Grenell said in an interview.

Obama has also been critical of U.S. partners at times, telling The Atlantic magazine earlier this year that some U.S. allies were "free riders" eager for Washington to solve the world's problems. Obama also has pushed NATO partners to live up to an agreement that they spend at least 2 percent of their country's gross domestic product on defense, a guideline only a few members adhere to.

In this Dec. 15, 2016 file photo, President-elect Donald Trump speaks during a rally in Hershey, Pa. AP

But the president's major foreign policy decisions have highlighted his belief that the U.S. is better served acting in concert with other nations - and that a lack of involvement from allies should be a warning sign to Washington. Both Republican Presidents George H.W. and George W. Bush were also proponents of coalition-building before taking drastic action overseas.

With the support of the UN Security Council and NATO allies, Obama joined the bombing campaign in Libya in 2011. He backed away from plans to launch airstrikes against Syria in 2013, spooked in part by the British Parliament's refusal to authorize its military to participate and scant willingness among other allies to join the effort.

On the diplomatic front, Obama's administration worked alongside five other nations to secure a landmark nuclear accord with Iran and partnered with the European Union to level economic sanctions against Russia for its provocations in Ukraine.

Stray bag of toys prompts scare at Trump Tower

NEW YORK (AP)—A stray backpack prompted the partial evacuation of Trump Tower on Tuesday, though bomb squad technicians quickly determined the unattended bag contained children's toys and was harmless.

Video posted online showed people running through the Manhattan skyscraper's public lobby as uniformed police officers waved them toward the exits.

Stephen Davis, the New York Police Department's top spokesman, said the bomb squad gave the "all clear" around 5 p.m. after examining the backpack left near the entrance to Niketown, a store in the building.

President-elect Donald Trump lives in the tower and has his offices there, though he was at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida when the bag was discovered.

His newly appointed press secretary, Sean Spicer, Tweeted that officials were "back to work" following the "false alarm."

Shoppers and visitors to Trump's namesake skyscraper described a chaotic scramble.

"It was hysteria," said Andy Martin, a 16-year-old from the New York City suburb of Huntington. "Police were shouting and telling people to leave."

Trump Tower, in addition to being the president-elect's home and business headquarters, contains residences, restaurants, retail stores—and a lobby that by law is open to the public to visitors daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Police receive about 42 reports every day of so-called suspicious packages, though that number can surge depending on current events. In the days after a pressure cooker bomb exploded earlier this year in New York City, police responded to more than 800 calls of "suspicious packages."

Maria Beckford, visiting New York from her native London, was in Niketown with her 13-year-old son looking to buy a pair of soccer cleats when she said they were told to urgently leave the store.

"We actually had them in his hands but because of everything we just had to leave," she said.

Nonprofit leader who wrote racist Michelle Obama post fired

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP)—A West Virginia nonprofit group has fired its director after she wrote a Facebook post referring to first lady Michelle Obama as an "ape in heels."

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's office said Tuesday that Pamela Ramsey Taylor, executive director of the Clay County Development Corp., was removed following an agreement with the nonprofit's board of directors.

Taylor's racist social media comments were not directly mentioned as the reason. She had been placed initially on a six-week leave that was scheduled to end last Friday.

However, the state requested "specific assurances" the nonprofit is following anti-discrimination policies and has been assured Taylor is gone as director, Tomblin spokeswoman Jessica Tice said.

The Appalachian Area Agency on Aging will manage the nonprofit daily for six months while the Clay County organization makes any changes needed for compliance as a state contractor, Tice said.

The nonprofit provides services to elderly and low-income residents in Clay County.

West Virginia's Bureau of Senior Services and the Bureau for Medical Services have been reviewing the nonprofit's state contracts following the furor. The state also asked for guarantees that Taylor had not discriminated against recipients of state services.

Clay Mayor Beverly Whaling was criticized for responding to Taylor's post: "Just made my day Pam." Whaling said later that she was referencing the change in the White House and wasn't racist. She resigned following the backlash.

ACROSS THE NATION

Man convicted in death of mom who led double life as escort

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. (AP)—A man has been convicted of murder and kidnapping in the 2007 death of a single mother from Colorado who led a double life as a paid escort. The Daily Sentinel newspaper in Grand Junction reports that 65-year-old Lester Ralph Jones was convicted Tuesday. A judge sentenced him to life in prison without parole. It marked Jones' second trial. The first ended in mistrial in September when jurors couldn't reach a unanimous verdict. Victim Paige Birgfeld was 34 when she disappeared in June 2007. Friends described her as a devoted mother of three who ran several businesses to support her children. After she disappeared, police uncovered details of her work as an escort. Birgfeld's remains were found in 2012, partially buried in a western Colorado gully.

Deputies: S. Carolina lawmaker beat wife, pointed gun at her

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—A South Carolina House member who rebuked his colleagues in a Christmas card for lacking morals when they took down the Confederate flag is accused of beating his wife and pointing a gun at her, deputies said. Officers in Aiken County charged Rep. Chris Corley with a pair of felonies that could send him to prison for up to 15 years after he attacked his wife during an argument over his infidelity late Monday night at their home in Graniteville, according to a police report. The couple's young children were there, and the wife took the family to her mother's house across the street after Corley threatened to kill her, then said he would kill himself, the report said. Corley's wife said he stopped hitting her only after noticing she was bleeding and hearing the children screaming, deputies said. Corley told officers his wife tried to punch him after accusing him of cheating, and the police report noted a scratch on his forehead.

Herd of 41 elk die in east Oregon after falling through ice

RICHLAND, Ore. (AP)—Officials say dozens of elk are dead after the herd fell through the ice at a reservoir in eastern Oregon. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife said in a Facebook post that 41 elk died Tuesday on the Powder River arm of Brownlee Reservoir. The Baker City Herald reports someone who lives near the reservoir called to report the incident. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Biologist Brian Ratliff told the newspaper the elk were trying to cross the reservoir from the north side when the ice broke in four places. Officials drove to the area to see if it was possible to save any of the elk or salvage meat, but Ratliff said neither option was possible. The reservoir is about 260 miles east of Portland.

Asia

At Pearl Harbor, US and Japan both seek absolution from WW2

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (AP)—In a historic pilgrimage, the leaders of Japan and the United States took to the hallowed waters of Pearl Harbor on Tuesday to prove that even the bitterest enemies can become allies. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did not apologize, but conceded Japan "must never repeat the horrors of war again."

AP

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, second from right, with U.S. President Barack Obama, right, wave after speaking at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2016.

Seventy-five years after Japan's surprise attack sent America marching into World War II, Abe and President Barack Obama peered down at the rusting wreckage of the USS Arizona, clearly visible in the tranquil, teal water. More than 1,000 U.S. war dead remain entombed in the submerged ship, and in a show of respect, Obama and Abe dropped purple petals into the water and stood in silence.

"As the prime minister of Japan, I offer my sincere and everlasting condolences to the souls of those who lost their lives here, as well as to the spirits of all the brave men and women whose lives were taken by a war that commenced in this very place," Abe said later at nearby Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

That was the closest Abe would get to an apology for the attack. And it was enough for Obama, who also declined to apologize seven months ago when he became America's first sitting president to visit Hiroshima, where the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb in a bid to end the war.

It was enough, too, for Alfred Rodrigues, a U.S. Navy veteran who survived the attack. The 96-year-old said he had no hard feelings and added, "War is war."

"They were doing what they were supposed to do, and we were doing what we were supposed to do," Rodrigues said before the visit.

Abe, who became Japan's first leader to visit Pearl Harbor with a U.S. president, said the visit "brought utter silence to me." His remarks capped a day that was carefully choreographed by the U.S. and Japan to show a strong and growing alliance between former foes.

They started with a formal meeting at another nearby military base, in what the White House said was likely Obama's last meeting with a foreign leader before leaving office in January. It was a bookend of sorts for the president, who nearly eight years ago invited Abe's predecessor to be the first leader he hosted at the White House.

Japanese officials said that in their talks, Abe and Obama agreed Tuesday to closely monitor the movements of China's first and sole aircraft carrier, which has sailed into the western Pacific for the first time. Taiwan's Defense Ministry reported Monday that the aircraft carrier and five warships sailed 90 nautical miles south of Taiwan, a self-governing island claimed by China. Beijing called it a routine training exercise.

In their last meeting before Obama leaves office next month, the two leaders affirmed that movements by the Chinese carrier Liaoning "warrant close attention from mid-term and long-term perspectives," the officials said. Late last week, the Liaoning advanced into the western Pacific after passing the so-called "first island chain," a sea defense line China unilaterally draws running from southern Japan to Taiwan, the Philippines and the southern South China Sea.

ASIAN BRIEFS

US raises no objection over China aircraft carrier drill

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States says China has the right to sail in international waters after a Chinese aircraft carrier cruised past Taiwan and into the contested South China Sea. Taiwan's Defense Ministry reported Monday that the aircraft carrier and five warships sailed 90 nautical miles south of Taiwan, a self-governing island claimed by China. Beijing says it is a routine training exercise. China has previously accused U.S. warships of making provocative passes through the South China Sea. State Department spokesman Mark Toner said Tuesday the U.S. recognizes lawful uses of the sea, and the same rights apply to the U.S., China and other nations. He said, "as we often make the case with our own naval vessels sailing ... in those same waters, it's freedom of navigation." Earlier this month, a Chinese navy vessel seized an U.S. Navy underwater glider that the U.S. said was conducting oceanic research in international waters off the Philippines. The U.S. called the seizure illegal and made a diplomatic protest. China returned the glider five days later.

S. Korean politicians call for nullifying sex slave deal

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's opposition politicians have called for nullifying a settlement reached between Seoul and Tokyo on compensation for South Korean women forced into sexual slavery by Japan's military in World War II. Their statements on the anniversary of the deal on Wednesday came amid growing political efforts to erase some of the key policies of impeached President Park Geun-hye. Democratic Party floor leader Woo Sang-ho says the party will work to invalidate the agreement if it wins the presidential elections that could take place in just months. Under the agreement, which was described by both governments as "irreversible," Japan pledged to fund a foundation to help support the former sex slaves. South Korea, in exchange, vowed to refrain from criticizing Japan over the issue.

World

Black box from crash under probe

SOCHI, Russia (AP)—Investigators recovered the flight-data recorder from a crashed Russian military plane Tuesday and began reviewing its contents to learn why the jet went down moments after takeoff, killing all 92 people aboard, including members of a famous choir.

The Tu-154 crashed into the Black Sea early Sunday two minutes after departing in good weather from the city of Sochi. The plane was carrying members of the Alexandrov Ensemble, widely known as the Red Army Choir, to a New Year's concert at a Russian military base in Syria.

Meanwhile, rescue workers raced to wrap up their efforts to recover bodies and wreckage ahead of predicted bad weather. The work has involved 3,500 people, including about 200 navy divers flown to the site from all over Russia. Aided by drones and submersibles, teams have recovered 12 bodies and numerous body fragments about a mile away from the shore.

The main flight recorder was quickly flown to Moscow, where experts started analyzing it, Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov said. Preliminary findings could be available as early as Wednesday, according to some aviation experts.

Investigators were looking into whether the crash might have been caused by bad fuel, pilot error, equipment failure or objects stuck in the engines. The top Russian investigative agency, known as the Investigative Committee, said it had taken samples from a fuel tank used to fill the plane, which flew from Moscow's Chkalovsky military airport and stopped in Sochi for refueling.

The committee also said it found a witness who filmed the crash but offered no details.

Online publication Life.ru published what it described as a script of cockpit conversation, with one pilot yelling about a problem with the plane's flaps and then shouting: "Commander, we are falling!" It was impossible to verify the report, but Life.ru is known to have good connections with Russian security agencies.

Flaps are moveable panels mounted on the edge of the wings to increase lift.

The Interfax news agency reported that the flaps were not functioning in sync, causing the jet to lose speed and triggering an aerodynamic stall. It also said that the preliminary analysis of the flight recorder pointed at pilot error.

The government has sought to quell speculation that the crash might have been caused by a bomb planted on board or a portable air-defense missile. A terrorist attack on a Syria-bound military flight would badly embarrass the Kremlin at a time when it boasts about the success of its campaign in Syria after Aleppo fell into President Bashar Assad's hands.

Russia's main domestic security and counter-terrorism agency, the FSB, said it found "no indications or facts pointing at the possibility of a terror attack or an act of sabotage" on the plane.

However, some aviation experts have noted that the crew's failure to report any technical problem and the large area over which fragments of the plane were scattered point to a possible explosion on board.

The Tu-154 is a Soviet-built three-engine airliner designed in the late 1960s. Russian airlines decommissioned the noisy, fuel-guzzling aircraft years ago, but the military and other government agencies continue using the plane, which is still loved by crews for its maneuverability and sturdiness.

Israel: 'Ironclad information' White House behind UN rebuke

JERUSALEM (AP)—Doubling down on its public break with the Obama administration, a furious Israeli government on Tuesday said it had received "ironclad" information from Arab sources that Washington actively helped craft last week's U.N. resolution declaring Israeli settlements in occupied territories illegal.

The allegation, which was denied by the State Department, further poisoned a toxic atmosphere between Israel and the outgoing administration in the wake of Friday's vote, raising questions about whether the White House might take further action against settlements in President Barack Obama's final weeks in office.

With the U.S. expected to participate in an international peace conference in France next month and Secretary of State John Kerry planning a final policy speech Wednesday, the Palestinians hope to capitalize on the momentum. Israel's nationalist government is banking on the incoming Trump administration to undo the damage with redoubled support.

Although the U.S. has long opposed the settlements, it has generally used its Security Council veto to protect its ally from censure. On Friday, it abstained from a resolution calling settlements a "flagrant violation" of international law, allowing it to pass by a 14-0 margin.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has had a cool relationship with Obama, called the resolution "shameful" and accused the U.S. of playing an active role in its passage.

On Tuesday, his spokesman went even further.

"We have ironclad information that emanates from sources in the Arab world and that shows the Obama administration helped craft this resolution and pushed hard for its eventual passage," David Keyes said. "We're not just going to be a punching bag and go quietly into the night."

He did not identify the Arab sources or say how Israel obtained the information. Israel has close security ties with Egypt, the original sponsor of last week's resolution who, as the lone Arab member of the Security Council, was presenting it at the Palestinians' request. Under heavy Israeli pressure, Egypt delayed the resolution indefinitely - but other members presented it for a vote a day later. Egypt ended up voting in favor of the measure.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Mark Toner said Kerry would lay out his vision for Israeli-Palestinian peace in the speech Wednesday. "He feels it's his duty in his waning weeks and days as secretary of state to lay out what he believes is a way to a peaceful two-state solution in the Middle East," Toner said.

Toner also rejected Israeli allegations of conspiring against it, saying Egypt and the Palestinians drafted the resolution and the U.S. worked with them on the language only after the intention to go forward was clear. "The idea this was precooked in advance is not accurate," he said.

Focus

Venezuela military trafficking food as country goes hungry

By HANNAH DREIER and JOSHUA GOODMAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PUERTO CABELLO, Venezuela (AP)—When hunger drew tens of thousands of Venezuelans to the streets in protest last summer, President Nicolas Maduro turned to the military to manage the country's diminished food supply, putting generals in charge of everything from butter to rice.

But instead of fighting hunger, the military is making money from it, an Associated Press investigation shows. That's what grocer Jose Campos found when he ran out of pantry staples this year. In the middle of the night, he would travel to an illegal market run by the military to buy pallets of corn flour—at 100 times the government-set price.

"The military would be watching over whole bags of money," Campos said. "They always had what I needed."

With much of the country on the verge of starvation and billions of dollars at stake, food trafficking has become one of the biggest businesses in Venezuela, the AP found. And from generals to foot soldiers, the military is at the heart of the graft, according to documents and interviews with more than 60 officials, business owners and workers, including five former generals.

As a result, food is not reaching those who most need it.

The U.S. government has taken notice. Prosecutors have opened investigations against senior Venezuelan officials, including members of the military, for laundering riches from food contracts through the U.S. financial system, according to four people with direct knowledge of the probes. No charges have been brought.

"Lately, food is a better business than drugs," said retired Gen. Cliver Alcala, who helped oversee Venezuela's border security. "The military is in charge of food management now, and they're not going to just take that on without getting their cut."

'WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?'

After opposition attempts to overthrow him, the late President Hugo Chavez began handing the military control over the food industry, creating a Food Ministry in 2004. His socialist-run government nationalized farms and food processing plants, then neglected them, and domestic production dried up. Oil-exporting Venezuela became dependent on food imports, but when the price of oil collapsed in 2014, the government no longer could afford all the country needed.

Food rationing grew so severe that Venezuelans spent all day waiting in lines. Pediatric wards filled up with underweight children, and formerly middle class adults began picking through trash bins for scraps. When people responded with violent street protests, Maduro handed the generals control over the rest of food distribution, and the country's ports.

The government now imports nearly all of Venezuela's food, according to Werner Gutierrez, the former dean of the agronomy school at the University of Zulia, and corruption is rampant, jacking up prices and leading to shortages.

"If Venezuela paid market prices, we'd be able to double our imports and easily satisfy the country's food needs," Gutierrez said. "Instead, people are starving."

One South American businessman said he paid millions in kickbacks to Venezuelan officials as the hunger crisis worsened, including $8 million to people who work for the current food minister, Gen. Rodolfo Marco Torres. The businessman insisted on speaking anonymously because he did not want to acknowledge participating in corruption.

Last July, he struggled to get Marco Torres's attention as a ship full of yellow corn waited to dock.

"This boat has been waiting for 20 days," he wrote in text messages seen by AP.

"What's the problem?" responded Marco Torres.

Although money was not mentioned, the businessman understood that he needed to give more in kickbacks. In the end, he told the general, the boat had to pull out because costs caused by the delay were mounting.

Bank documents from the businessman's country show that he was a big supplier, receiving at least $131 million in contracts from Venezuelan food ministers between 2012 and 2015. He explained that vendors like him can afford to pay off military officials because they build huge profit margins into what they bill the state.

For example, his $52 million contract for the yellow corn was drawn up to be charged at more than double the market rate at the time, suggesting a potential overpayment of more than $20 million for that deal alone.

AP

In this Nov. 14, 2016 photo, a youth uses his pillow as a bag to collect rice from the pavement that shook loose from a food cargo truck waiting to enter the port in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, the port that handles the majority of Venezuela's food imports.

The Food Ministry's annual report shows significant overpayments across the board, compared to market prices. And the prices the government pays for imported foods have been increasing in recent years, while global food prices remain stable.

This spring, the opposition-controlled congress voted to censure Marco Torres for graft. Maduro vetoed it as an attempt to hurt the Food Ministry, and Marco Torres stayed on as minister.

Internal budgets from the ministry obtained by AP show the overpayment continues. For example, the government budgeted for $118 million of yellow corn in July at $357 a ton, which would amount to an overpayment of more than $50 million relative to prices that month.

"What's amazing about this is it's like a clean form of corruption," said Carabobo state lawmaker Neidy Rosal, who has denounced food-related government theft worth hundreds of millions of dollars. "It's like drug trafficking you can carry out in broad daylight."

Marco Torres did not respond to several requests for comment by phone, email and hand-delivered letter. In the past, he has said that he will not be trapped in fights with a bourgeoisie opposition.

'SCRAPING THE POT'

By putting the military in charge of food, Maduro is trying to prevent soldiers from going hungry and being tempted to participate in an uprising against an increasingly unpopular government, said retired Gen. Antonio Rivero. Venezuela's military has a long history of coups against governments, and Maduro has arrested several officials for allegedly conspiring against him from within.

"They gave absolute control to the military," Rivero said from exile in Miami. "That drained the feeling of rebellion from the armed forces, and allowed them to feed their families."

However, it also opened the door to widespread graft and further squeezed the food supply. In large part due to concerns of corruption following the government's takeover of the food industry, the three largest global food traders—U.S.-based Archer Daniels Midland Co., Bunge Ltd. and Cargill—have stopped selling to the Venezuelan government.

One major scam involves the strict currency controls that have been a hallmark of the administration. The government gives out a limited amount of coveted U.S. currency at a rate of 10 bolivars to the dollar. Almost everyone else has to buy dollars on the ever more expensive black market, currently at 3,000 bolivars to the dollar.

The holders of licenses to import food are among the select few who get to buy dollars at the vastly cheaper rate. Alcala, the retired general, said some officials distribute these much-desired licenses to friends. The friends then use only a fraction of the dollars to import food, and share the rest with the officials.

"We call it 'scraping the pot,' and it's the biggest scam going in Venezuela," Alcala said.

In 2014, one general presented Maduro with a list of 300 companies suspected of simply pocketing the cheap dollars they obtained with their licenses and not importing anything. No action was ever taken and the general was forced into exile, accused of corruption himself.

Some contracts go to companies that have no experience dealing in food or seem to exist only on paper. Financial documents obtained by AP show that Marco Torres gave Panama-registered company Atlas Systems International a $4.6 million contract to import pasta. Atlas has all the hallmarks of a shell company, including no known assets and the use of secretive shares to hide the identity of the company's true owners. Another government food supplier, J.A. Comercio de Generos Alimenticios, lists on its website a non-existent address on a narrow, partially paved street in an industrial city near Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The two companies transferred more than $5.5 million in U.S. dollars in 2012 and 2013 to a Geneva account controlled by two young Venezuelans, according to bank and internal company documents seen by AP. The Venezuelans were Jesus Marquina Parra and Nestor Marquina Parra, brothers-in-law of the then-food minister, Gen. Carlos Osorio. Efforts to reach the brothers were unsuccessful.

Osorio is no longer food minister, but has an even more important role in overseeing food. He was promoted in September to inspector general of the armed forces, with the mission of ensuring transparency in the military's management of the nation's food supply.

Arturo Sanchez, a former supply chain manager at a multinational dairy company, recounted unpleasant encounters with Osorio. In one case, officers forced the company to buy fructose it didn't need because they wanted to unload merchandise he suspected was ill-gotten. Another time, he said, national guardsmen took four trucks of goods without paying. Sanchez fled to Florida in 2014.

"I spent a year living in the U.S. not being able to sleep remembering all the risky situations I lived through," he said.

Osorio did not respond to requests for comment. But in the past he threatened to sue opposition lawmakers for staining his honor with false accusations of corruption. He blamed an economic war for the food shortages.

The Defense Ministry and presidential press office refused to answer repeated calls, emails and hand-delivered letters requesting comment. In the past, officials have accused the opposition of exaggerating the problem of corruption for political gain. They have said that the military's hierarchical structure makes it ideally suited to combat the real culprits: Right-wing businessmen trying to bring down the economy.

From time to time, the government carries out raids of warehouses holding smuggled goods and arrests lower-ranking military officers accused of graft. For example, the night market in Carabobo state where Campos bought his corn flour was eventually shut down and 57 tons of smuggled food seized. Now Campos buys staples from intermediaries he suspects are working with the same military officials.

In January, the government quietly arrested 40 state employees for stealing large quantities of food from open-air markets. One of those still in jail is a colonel who had been named by Osorio to serve as president of a state agency that imported food.

"We have the moral fortitude and the discipline to take on this task of protecting what belongs to the people," the defense minister, Gen. Vladimir Padrino Lopez, said in September. "The state has an obligation to root out corruption in all levels of public administration."

Environment

Cheetah numbers decline as African habitat shrinks

By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—Amid population declines for many wildlife species in Africa, conservationists are sounding alarm bells for the cheetah, the fastest animal on land.

An estimated 7,100 cheetahs remain in the wild across Africa and in a small area of Iran, and human encroachment has pushed the wide-ranging predator out of 91 percent of its historic habitat, according to a study published on Monday.

Consequently, the cheetah should be defined as "endangered" instead of the less serious "vulnerable" on an official watch list of threatened species worldwide, the study said.

"This period is really crunch time for species like cheetah that need these big areas," said Sarah Durant, a cheetah specialist at the Zoological Society of London and the lead author of the report published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

About 77 percent of cheetah habitats fall outside wildlife reserves and other protected areas, the study said, requiring outreach to governments and villages to promote tolerance for a carnivore that sometimes hunts livestock.

Besides habitat loss, cheetahs face attacks from villagers, loss of antelope and other prey that are killed by people for their meat, an illegal trade in cheetah cubs, the trafficking of cheetah skins and the threat of getting hit by speeding vehicles.

A cheetah has been recorded running at a speed of 29 meters (95 feet) per second. The species may move more slowly while hunting and it can only maintain top speeds for a few hundred meters.

More than half of the world's cheetahs live in southern Africa, including in Namibia and Botswana, which have relatively sparse human populations. Cheetahs have been virtually wiped out in Asia, save for fewer than 50 in Iran, according to the study, whose contributors included the Panthera group and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Durant said there was uncertainty over the 7,100 number, which was based on data from experts in areas where cheetahs live and estimates for other areas. Cheetahs are difficult to find because they move over vast regions, she said.

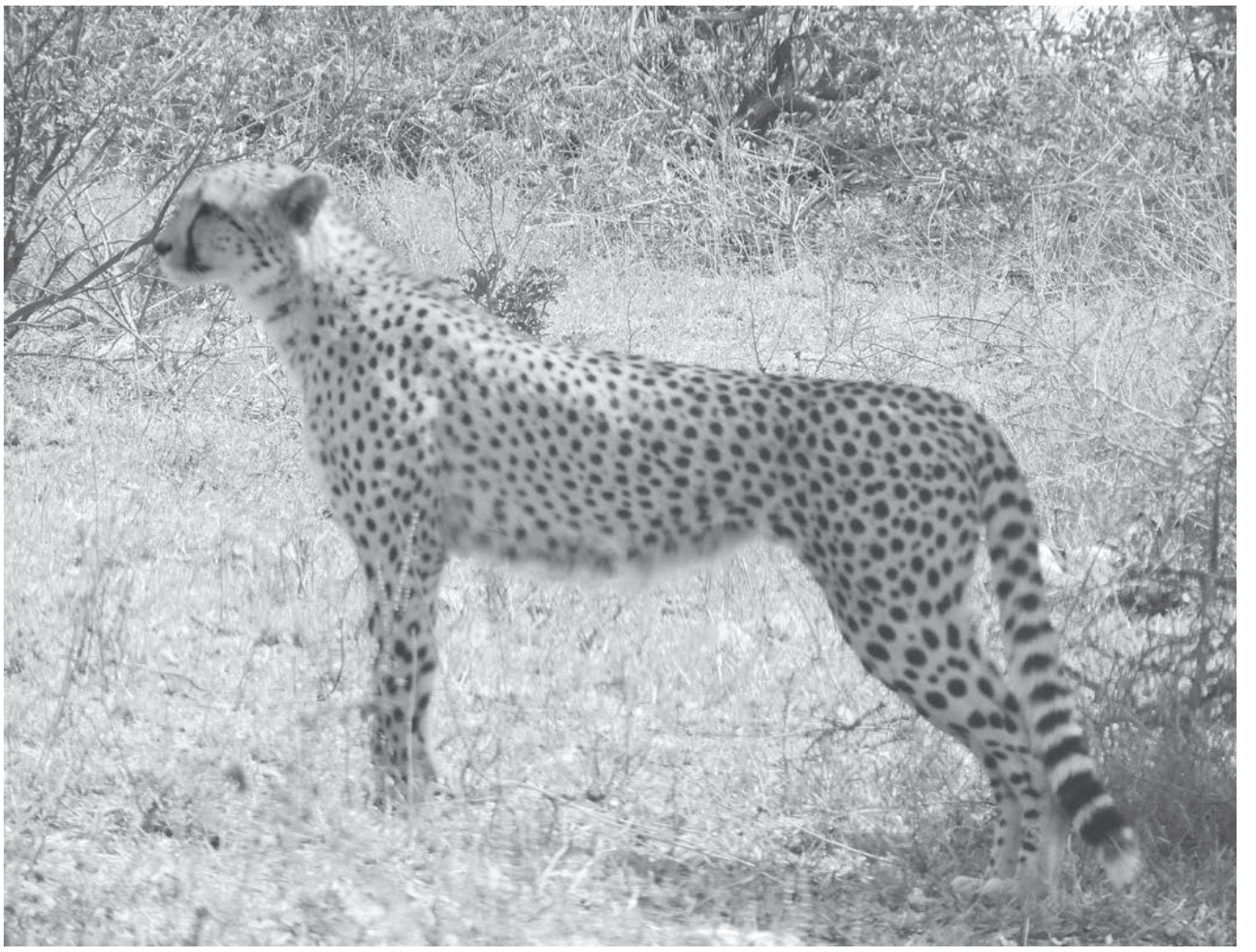
Durant also led a previous assessment of nearly 6,700 cheetahs published last year by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which keeps a watch list of threatened species. Since then, experts have provided new information and refined counting methods, contrasting with rough estimates in the 10,000-range in recent decades.

The cheetah population in Zimbabwe declined from an estimated 1,500 in 1999 to between 150 and 170, according to a survey conducted between 2013 and 2015 by a group called Cheetah Conservation Project Zimbabwe. The group solicited cheetah photographs and reports of sightings from tourists, safari guides and others and interviewed more than 1,000 people, including village heads and cattle managers.

Cheetah experts note that Angola is developing a plan to protect cheetahs and African wild dogs. That could yield better data on cheetah numbers in a country where information has been thin, said Rosemary Groom, a conservationist who participated in an October workshop on the subject in Angola's Quicama National Park.

Despite habitat loss across the continent, the Mara area in southwest Kenya and in the adjacent Serengeti National Park in Tanzania still offers a refuge, said Femke Broekhuis, head of the Mara Cheetah Project. Recent data from a GPS collar on one Mara cheetah showed that it traveled 19 kilometers (12 miles) overnight, she said.

Cheetahs often roam alone, though on Monday morning Broekhuis saw a rare sight: five male cheetahs, together.



In this Aug. 22, 2012 photo, a cheetah is photographed in the Tamboti Game Reserve, near Lephalale, South Africa. AP

In this photo taken on Aug. 22, 2012 a couple of cheetahs are photographed in the Tamboti Game Reserve, near Lephalale, South Africa. AP

Despite frigid weather, Mongolians protest country's worsening smog

By GANBAT NAMJILSANGARAV
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia (AP)—Hundreds of Mongolians braved frigid weather Monday to stage a protest in the country's capital demanding that the government do more to address worsening air pollution that they fear is sickening their children and shortening their lives.

The demonstrators gathered in a public square in front of government offices, holding banners with slogans such as "Let's give fresh air to our future children," ''Smog is silent killer" and "We can't breathe."

"We are desperate and we are organizing this demonstration to make authorities feel our frustration and anger," said Purevkhuu Tserendorj, one of the protest's organizers and a mother of two.

The air temperature hovered around minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus 4 Fahrenheit).

According to UNICEF, the United Nations' children's agency, air pollution is linked to the three diseases that have resulted in the most "lost life-years" in Mongolia.

The agency said in February that pneumonia and other respiratory infections were among the leading causes of death among Mongolian children under the age of 5. It said that the lungs of children living in highly polluted districts of Ulaanbaatar, the capital, do not function as well as those living in rural areas, with real risks of them suffering chronic respiratory diseases when they're older.

The protesters demanded that the government increase the number of beds in hospitals that have been overcrowded with sick children and develop a plan to reduce air pollution by 80 percent by 2018. They also urged the government to install air filters in kindergartens in the capital's slum areas, which are worst-hit by the pollution.

Ulaanbaatar is one of the world's coldest capitals, with temperatures sometimes falling to -40 C (-40 F) in January, the coldest month of the year. More than half of the city's 1.3 million residents have to rely on burning raw coal, plastic, rubber tires and other materials to stay warm and cook meals in their homes. Such areas, where residents live in traditional round tents that do not have centralized heating, have been shrouded in choking smog in recent days.

Responding to the protesters' calls, Mongolian Minister of Environment and Tourism Oyunkhorol Dulamsuren said that between 2011 and 2015, the government spent more than $37 million while international donors spent $47 million on measures aimed at curbing air pollution.

Life & Style

No one could make us laugh through pain like Carrie Fisher

NEW YORK (AP)—No one could make us laugh through the pain like Carrie Fisher.

The daughter of Hollywood stars Eddie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds, and a survivor of early fame, drug addiction and bipolar disorder, she wrote with unsentimental wit and understanding about her private struggles and about an industry she was raised in but stood apart from.

Fisher, known to the world as Princess Leia of "Star Wars," died Tuesday at 60, four days after falling ill aboard an airline flight. Media reports said the actress had suffered a heart attack.

"I do believe you're only as sick as your secrets. If that's true, I'm just really healthy," she said in a confessional 2009 interview with The Associated Press.

The public fell in love with her twice: as Princess Leia and as the wry truth-teller of such books as "Postcards From the Edge," ''Wishful Drinking" and "The Princess Diarist," in which she revealed having an intense affair with "Star Wars" co-star Harrison Ford.

Fisher told plenty of secrets about othersabout her parents' breakup when she was 2, about being advised by Warren Beatty on wearing a bra in "Shampoo," and about arguing with then-husband Paul Simon about whether it was better to be a man or a woman.

Asked by NPR recently why she wrote about her fling with Ford, who was 15 years older and married, she joked that she could hold back no longer because he had refused to die: "I kept calling and saying, 'When are you going to die because I want to tell the story?'"

But she was toughest on herself and unafraid to turn trauma into humor. She became the most knowable of celebrities, with a great and generous gift for bringing us into her unusual life.

"One of the therapists came in to admit me and asked how long I had been a drug addict," she wrote in Postcards," her autobiographical novel that became a movie of the same name. "I said I didn't think I was a drug addict because I didn't take any one drug. 'Then you're a drugs addict,' she said. She asked if I had deliberately tried to kill myself. I was insulted by the question. I guess when you find yourself having overdosed, it's a good indicator that your life isn't working."

She is survived by her mother; her daughter, Billie Lourd, from a relationship with talent agent Bryan Lourd; her brother, the actor-filmmaker Todd Fisher; and her half-sisters, actresses Joely and Tricia Leigh Fisher. Her father died in 2010.

Born and raised in Beverly Hills, Carrie Fisher was a bookish child who had difficult relationships with both parents. In a celebrity breakup that made headlines everywhere in 1958, Eddie Fisher left his family for Elizabeth Taylor.

Eddie Fisher was hardly present for his daughter in her early years, and Reynolds' second husband, shoe store magnate Harry Karl, was even worse. He squandered his own money and Reynolds' on gambling and prostitutes and left the actress and her children broke and devastated.

Carrie Fisher went into the family business earlytoo early, she would later say. She was performing on stage by age 12 and appeared with Reynolds in the 1973 Broadway revival "Irene." She was still a teenager when she made her feature film debut in "Shampoo" in 1975.

Even after "Star Wars," Fisher would speak often of feeling overshadowed by her mother and about the need to break away, a conflict dramatized in "Postcards From the Edge."

Mother and daughter were estranged for years but reconciled later in life and came to admire each other's talent and determination. "Bright Lights: Starring Debbie Reynolds and Carrie Fisher," an HBO documentary, is scheduled for release in 2017.

Fisher's film credits included a wide range of spoofs, musicals and romantic comedies, from "Austin Powers" and "The Blues Brothers" to "Hannah and Her Sisters" and "When Harry Met Sally ..." Meryl Streep was the star when "Postcards From the Edge," with a screenplay by Fisher, was adapted into a film of the same name in 1990. Shirley MacLaine played Streep's mother, the stand-in for Reynolds.

But for millions, Fisher was Princess Leia, with her now-iconic hair bagels and metal bikini. She uttered the immortal phrase "Help me Obi-Wan Kenobi, you're my only hope" in the original "Star Wars" in 1977.

Director George Lucas, who considered Jodie Foster, Amy Irving and dozens of others for the role, said he had been looking for an actress who could "hold her own" against her male co-stars.

In her 2008 memoir "Wishful Drinking," she recounted how Lucas told her on the first day of shooting that she couldn't wear a bra under her costume because "there's no underwear in space." Lucas, she said, later explained that a woman could be strangled by her bra in the weightlessness of space.

Fisher wisecracked in her book that that would make for a "fantastic obit," adding: "I tell my younger friends that no matter how I go, I want it reported that I drowned in moonlight, strangled by my own bra."

Fisher would make a lot of wisecracks about the role that made her pop-culture royalty

AP

In this Thursday, April 7, 2011 file photo, Carrie Fisher arrives at the 2011 NewNowNext Awards in Los Angeles.

and led Reynolds to note ruefully she was now regarded as the mother of Princess Leia.

Fisher disliked her hairstyle, disparaged her hybrid British-American accent in the films and was appalled by some of the "Star Wars" merchandise, including a Princess Leia candy dispenser.

Given the chance, she would have preferred to play Han Solo.

"When I first read the script I thought that's the part to be, always wry and sardonic," she told a gathering in England in 2015. "He's always that. I feel like a lot of the time Leia's either worried or pissed or, thank God, sort of snarky. But I'm much more worried and pissed than Han Solo ever was, and those aren't fun things to play."

Her drug problems pre-dated "Star Wars." She recalled smoking pot at age 13 (She would later learn that there is a kind of marijuana called "Princess Leia.") and dropped acid at 21.

She used so much cocaine that even world-class partyer John Belushi, who died of a drug overdose at 33, warned her to stop.

In her 20s, she was diagnosed as bipolar and treated with electroshock therapy and medication, which she wrote about in the memoir "Shockaholic."

"People relate to aspects of my stories, and that's nice for me because then I'm not all alone with it," she told the AP in 2009.

Ever ready to satirize herself, she even played "Carrie Fisher" a few times, as in David Cronenberg's dark Hollywood sendup "Maps to the Stars" and in an episode of "Sex and the City." In the past 15 years, Fisher also had a steady career as a television guest star, perhaps most memorably as a has-been comedy legend on "30 Rock."

Her one-woman show, "Wishful Drinking," which she had performed on and off across the country since 2006, made it to Broadway in 2009 and was captured for HBO in 2010.

"I don't have a problem with drugs so much as I have a problem with sobriety," she wisecracked in the show. At another point, she said: "I'm a product of Hollywood inbreeding. When two celebrities mate, something like me is the result."

REACTIONS

Reactions to Tuesday's death of Carrie Fisher:

■ "no words #Devastated"—**Mark Hamill**, on Twitter.

■ "Carrie was one-of-a-kind. brilliant, original. Funny and emotionally fearless. She lived her life, bravely... My thoughts are with her daughter Billie, her mother Debbie, her brother Todd, and her many friends. We will all miss her."—**Harrison Ford**, in a statement.

■ "There are no words for this loss. Carrie was the brightest light in every room she entered. I will miss her dearly."—**Peter Mayhew**, who played Chewbacca in "Star Wars," on Twitter.

■ "I'm deeply saddened at the news of Carrie's passing. She was a dear friend, whom I greatly respected and admired. The force is dark today!"—**Billy Dee Williams**, on Twitter.

■ "Carrie and I have been friends most of our adult lives. She was extremely smart; a talented actress, writer and comedienne with a very colorful personality that everyone loved. In Star Wars she was our great and powerful princess—feisty, wise and full of hope in a role that was more difficult than most people might think."—**George Lucas**, in a statement.

■ "Thank you to everyone who has embraced the gifts and talents of my beloved and amazing daughter. I am grateful for your thoughts and prayers that are now guiding her to her next stop. Love Carries Mother."—**Debbie Reynolds**, on Facebook.

■ "Carrie Fisher was one-of-a-kind, a true character who shared her talent and her truth with us all with her trademark wit and irreverence. Millions fell in love with her as the indomitable Princess Leia; she will always have a special place in the hearts of Star Wars fans as well as all of us who were lucky enough to know her personally."—**Bob Iger**, chairman and chief executive officer, The Walt Disney Company, in a statement.

■ "When I was a young man, Carrie Fisher she was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen. She turned out to be witty and bright as well."—**Steve Martin**, on Twitter.

■ "I'm deeply saddened to learn of the death of Carrie Fisher. I will miss our banterings. A wonderful talent & light has been extinguished."—**William Shatner**, on Twitter.

■ "She was a beautiful spirit and a light that has dimmed too soon. ... What a sad way to end the year."—SAG-AFTRA President **Gabrielle Carteris**, in a statement.

■ "Carrie Fisher didn't make it. I am so terribly sorry, and send my sincere condolences to her family, friends and fans all around the world."—Bette Midler, on Twitter.

■ "I thought I had got what I wanted under the tree. I didn't. In spite of so many thoughts and prayers from so many. I am very, very sad."—**Anthony Daniels**, on Twitter.

■ "@CarriefFisher was a brilliant writer, actor, and friend. She was so much fun. I can't believe she's gone."—**Ellen DeGeneres**, on Twitter.

■ "Carrie Fisher has passed, she was funnier&smarter than anyone had the right to be. Sail On Silver Girl."—**Whoopi Goldberg**, on Twitter.

Taylor Swift surprises 96-year-old fan in Missouri

ST. LOUIS (AP)—At age 96, Cyrus Porter is a devoted Taylor Swift fan. He's traveled from his rural Missouri home to St. Louis and Memphis, Tennessee, to see her in concert.

On Monday, in the midst of a thunderstorm, the concert came to the World War II combat veteran, a surprise visit from the singer and her parents.

He had hosted 72 people for a family Christmas a day earlier. Many of his relatives were still there when a van pulled into the driveway of his home in New Madrid, about 130 miles south of St. Louis.

"My daughter opened the door and said, 'It's Taylor Swift!'" Porter told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "I couldn't believe it. It's not a miracle but I'd say it's pretty close."

Swift spent about an hour talking with Porter and family. Then, on the enclosed back porch, she sang her 2014 No. 1 hit, "Shake It Off," with dozens of Porter's relatives joining in.

"The whole family was singing along on the back porch," Porter said. "I though the police might come by!"

Porter likes his classic country, but he has been a fan of the 27-year-old singer ever since she burst onto the music scene as a teenager.

"The way she puts on a show is what I like," he said.

It wasn't clear how Swift came to find out about Porter's fandom, but he said that he was "proud of her to take the time out to do something like that for an old country boy."

After fighting in Germany, Porter spent decades working and farming in Missouri. He's been married to his wife, 89-year-old Harriett, for 69 years and raised nine children.

They have a combined 49 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. "We had 49 stockings on the wall for Christmas and each of them got a $2 bill!" Porter said.

He was still basking in the glow of the large family holiday when Swift showed up.

"It's really special she takes time out to do something like that," said Porter's daughter, Carolyn Allred, 66, of Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Porter was cherishing one souvenir: "I got lipstick on my face!"

Garry Shandling died from blood clot in heart, coroner says

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Garry Shandling died from a blood clot in his heart, coroner's officials said Tuesday more than seven months after the comedian's unexpected death.

A report by Los Angeles' coroner's officials released Tuesday states the fatal clot occurred after the comedian developed blood clots in his legs, a condition known as deep vein thrombosis. The comedian had not been feeling well during a trip to Hawaii, the report stated. Shandling died March 24 after calling paramedics to his home.

Los Angeles coroner's officials had delayed issuing their determination of what killed the 66-year-old until after a review of his medical records and toxicology tests were completed. The toxicology results found only a therapeutic amount of Xanax and some cold medication in his system.

AP

In this Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008 file photo, comedian Garry Shandling attends a Democratic presidential debate in Los Angeles.

In 1992, Shandling created his comic masterpiece with "The Larry Sanders Show," which starred him as an egomaniacal late-night TV host with an angst-ridden show-biz life behind the scenes. The HBO series ran until 1998.

As Larry, Shandling dug deep to confront his own demons, and did it brilliantly as the series teetered between dual realities: public and private; make-believe and painfully true.

Shandling had blurred the lines for a television comedy before, with his "It's Garry Shandling Show," in the 1980s. Actors on the Showtime sitcom routinely broke the fourth wall to speak directly to the audience on what they were up to.

After "Larry Sanders" ended, Shandling's few public appearances included hosting the Emmys Awards in 2000 and 2004 and a role in 2001's "Zoolander."

Shortly before his death, he appeared in Jerry Seinfeld's web series "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee" in a segment that had the pair recount memories of their stand-up comedy days and trying to make it in Hollywood.

George Michael mourned by boyfriend and ex-boyfriend

LONDON (AP)—As mourners kept on flocking Tuesday to George Michael's home in north London, the singer's former longtime partner and his current boyfriend both spoke of their sadness at his death.

The boyfriend, hairstylist Fadi Fawaz, told the Telegraph newspaper on Tuesday he found the 53-year-old singer dead in bed when he arrived at Michael's house on Christmas Day so they could attend a holiday lunch together.

"Everything had been very complicated recently, but George was looking forward to Christmas, and so was I," Fawaz said. "Now everything is ruined. I want people to remember him the way he was. He was a beautiful person."

Fawaz tweeted "I will never stop missing you" to Michael.

Michael's former partner Kenny Goss, who was with the singer for many years, said in a statement that he was "heartbroken" by the death of his longtime love.

"He was a major part of my life and I loved him very, very much. He was an extremely kind and generous man," Goss said.

Michael announced in 2011 that he and Goss had separated.

Since word of his unexpected death, British newspapers have been filled with stories about Michael's many generous acts, often accompanied by his admonishments to keep them secret.

Among the stories that surfaced was Michael's donation of 15,000 pounds to a couple in need of money to pay for fertility treatments.

Crowds of grieving fans placed flowers and other tributes outside his home in the Highgate neighborhood of north London.

The singer's publicist released a statement saying Michael's family and close friends have been "touched beyond words" by the outpouring of affection for him.

"There could be no more fitting tribute than the many, many, kind words that have been said and the numerous plays his records have received," the statement said, adding that there was no truth to reports that Michael died under suspicious circumstances.

Teen Vogue writer receives threats after Fox News interview

NEW YORK (AP)—A woman involved in a heated debate with Fox News Channel's Tucker Carlson over Ivanka Trump said Tuesday she's received thousands of angry responses, including being threatened with rape on Christmas Day.

The reaction to Lauren Duca, a writer for Teen Vogue magazine, is the latest example of how ugliness in political discourse didn't end with the election. Duca has been sharing several of the responses to her television appearance on social media.

She was a guest on Carlson's show Friday to discuss an incident where Donald Trump's daughter was verbally accosted while traveling on an airplane with her family. Duca had tweeted that Ivanka Trump's role in the incoming administration was fair game for discussion.

The segment was knocked off-kilter, however, when Duca agreed with Carlson that it was wrong for Ivanka Trump to be confronted on an airplane. Carlson had been prepared to question Duca about her tweet and other things she had written that had been critical of Donald Trump.

The two went toe-to-toe in what became gripping television, with Duca at one point calling Carlson a "partisan hack" intent on not allowing her to speak. Carlson, making reference to pop culture stories Duca had also written, ended the segment by saying Duca should "stick to the thigh-high boots. You're better at that."

Duca said she was "shell-shocked" after the interview but also proud. She found it frustrating to be involved in just the sort of discussion she found infuriating during the presidential campaign, with people who seemed to be talking past each other.

Then the online attacks began, many too lewd to repeat. She saw an online discussion board created to encourage people "to harass me until I have a mental breakdown or go into porn."

She said she responded to one person, asking whether it felt odd to attack a stranger on Christmas Day.

"He wrote back saying 'get raped,' so that didn't work," she said.

Her phone appeared to have a life of its own on Christmas. "It was like it was having a seizure in the corner and I would go look at it every couple of hours," she said.

Duca said she found it discouraging that many people accused her of defending the person who accosted Ivanka Trump, when she clearly did not. The headline on a story about the incident in The Daily Caller, a website co-founded by Carlson in 2010, said "Tucker Carlson embarrasses feminist who defended harassing Ivanka."

There was no immediate comment from Fox.

Duca has been re-tweeting several of the messages she's received, even with a twist of humor: correcting the grammar, for instance, of someone who wrote "your a scumbag whore."

Baby's birth sparks interest in absentee father's family

DEAR ABBY: My twin sister and I were raised by a single mom. Because Mom received welfare benefits, she was required to list "potential" fathers in order to receive aid. After a time, the state required paternity tests be given to the men she had listed, so we had no idea who our biological father was until we were 16.

Although paternity was proven, he never attempted to contact us. I recently learned that he died several years ago at a relatively young age (mid-50s). I also discovered that he had at least two other children, one of whom I was able to locate on Facebook.

I don't want to cause any undue distress by reaching out to them. However, I'm curious about any historical information they could provide, particularly medical or hereditary issues I should know about. All of a sudden I have this overwhelming need for information, especially now that I have a child.

Should I try and contact my half-siblings, or let it go and hope there's nothing there to find out? I don't want to hurt anyone, but I feel I just have to know.

NEEDS TO KNOW

DEAR NEEDS TO KNOW: The revelation that you and your sister exist may come as a shock to your half-siblings, so be prepared. Ideally, the way to go about asking for the information you're seeking would be through an intermediary such as a lawyer. However, if you can't afford one, then write a letter explaining who you are and that you are a parent and would like any information that can be provided about any genetic illnesses that run in your father's side of the family, including his cause of death. While you're at it, be sure to mention that you are not trying to intrude -- only to find information that may be pertinent to you, your twin sister and your child.

DEAR ABBY: I have been separated from my ex-wife for a year and I'm still depressed. I can't eat, I sleep only a couple of hours a night and since the split I have lost 40 pounds.

I'm in my late 20s. My wife and I were together since high school. We have two kids. We separated because of her infidelity and immaturity. I was the one who decided to leave and I don't regret my decision, but a part of me can't move on.

I'm still nice to her and cater to her sometimes, but I want to stop. I feel she uses me because she knows I will always love her. How do I break my bond with her?

STILL NOT OVER HER IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR STILL NOT OVER HER: If your ex-wife is the only woman you have ever dated or been intimate with, it's not surprising that this has been extremely hard for you. Divorce can bring with it a roller coaster of emotions, some high and some low.

Because you can't seem to break out of the lows, it might help you to go online and research divorce support groups for men and attend some meetings. However, if you find you need more help than that to disengage—and you may—ask your doctor for a referral to a licensed mental health professional.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

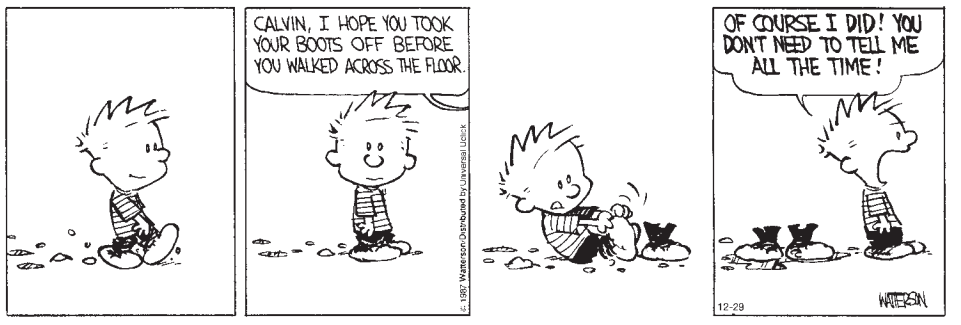
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


CALVIN, I HOPE YOU TOOK YOUR BOOTS OFF BEFORE YOU WALKED ACROSS THE FLOOR.
OF COURSE I DID! YOU DON'T NEED TO TELL ME ALL THE TIME!
12-29
WATTERSON

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WOW. LOOK AT THAT SNOW. IT'S REALLY COMING DOWN.
YOU THINK WE'LL BE SNOWED IN?
I'D SAY IT'S NOT LOOKING GOOD.
IT'S KIND OF EXCITING.
YOU HAVEN'T SEEN "THE SHINING", HAVE YOU?
OH, I HAVE! CAN I RIDE MY BIG WHEEL INSIDE?
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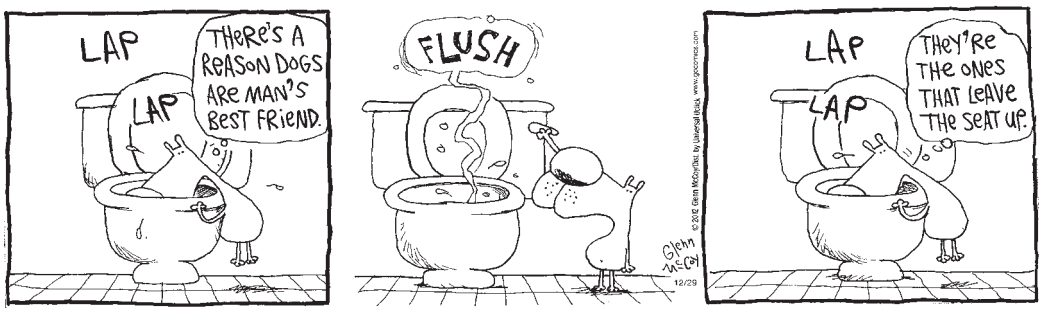
The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

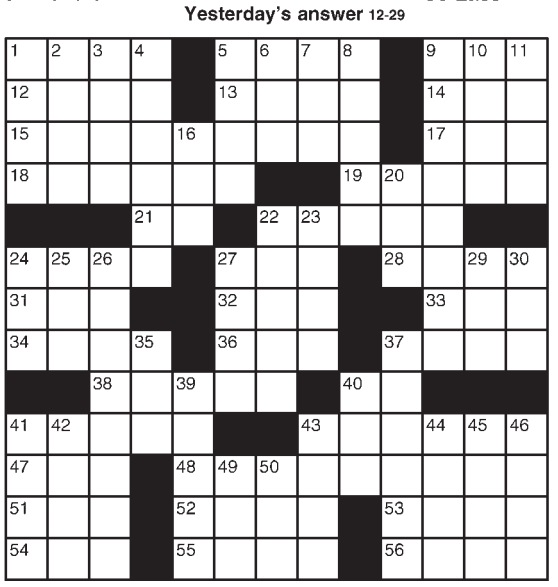
ACROSS
1 Gentle soul
5 Carrots' mates
9 Baseball execs
12 Slugger Moises
13 Arm bone
14 Overseas agreement?
15 Charlie Brown's outburst
17 Chill in the air
18 Return address name
19 Pitchers
21 That guy
22 Parsley piece
24 Meditative practice
27 Scratch (out)
28 Coat with gold
31 Olympics chant
32 Make lace
33 Shad product
34 Boxers
36 Packed away
37 Sci-fi villain
38 Roof feature
40 Bell or Barker
41 First-rate, in slang
43 Royal home
47 Ump
48 Energetic achievers
51 Tolkien creature
52 Russian river
53 Nest-egg choices
54 QB's stats
55 Pretzel seasoning
56 Crooner Perry

DOWN
1 Trails
2 Skin soother
3 Armstrong's destination
4 The Enlightened One
5 Kitten's sound
6 Yale grad
7 Chemical suffix
8 Less risky
9 2014 Affleck film
10 Naturalist John
11 Tries the tea
16 "Gosh!"
20 Peruke
22 Use the rink
23 Tennis ace Sampras
24 "Uh-huh"
25 Buck-eyes' sch.
26 Exploding cigars and such
27 List-ending abbr.
29 Brit's restroom
30 Society newbie
35 Muppet eagle
37 Sea off Poland
39 Counterfeit
40 Wrestling surface
41 Quarry
42 Tear
43 Hide
44 Aviation prefix
45 Study all night
46 Canadian gas brand
49 Mouths (Lat.)
50 Lass

Solution time: 25 mins.

B	A	N	A	■	S	I	S	■	S	P	E	W
E	G	A	D	■	I	N	K	■	C	A	S	E
S	A	N	D	I	E	G	O	■	A	L	A	S
T	R	O	L	L	S	■	A	L	L	O	U	T
■	■	■	E	S	T	■	L	A	L	A	■	■
S	T	L	■	A	A	H	■	D	O	L	L	S
P	O	O	H	■	S	U	P	■	P	T	A	S
A	E	S	O	P	■	B	A	D	■	O	P	T
■	■	G	U	S	T	■	R	A	M	■	■	■
S	T	A	D	I	A	■	A	N	I	M	U	S
C	I	T	I	■	P	A	S	A	D	E	N	A
A	N	O	N	■	E	G	O	■	S	O	D	S
D	E	S	I	■	D	E	L	■	T	W	O	S

Yesterday's answer 12-29



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jude Law, 44; Patricia Clarkson, 57; Ted Danson, 69; Jon Voight, 78.

Happy Birthday: You'll have important choices to make. If you are too bold or you take on the impossible, you will fall short. Use your insight and realize that you don't have to make snap decisions or follow what someone else decides to do. Show strength and courage and think matters through. Utilize your discipline and past experience and you will reach your goals. Your numbers are 8, 14, 20, 24, 33, 38, 41.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't share your plans prematurely. It's important to have everything in its place before you include others in your plans. Stay focused on important partnerships and try not to do anything to upset these connections moving forward. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Interact with your peers as much as you can. Check out what's new in whatever industry you are working in or studying to be a part of. A short trip will change your mind about your future. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Take a serious look at the year gone by and consider what you may do differently next time. Make amends with someone. Be willing to admit that you made mistakes as well. Go forward without malice or contempt for others. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Time spent with someone you are in a partnership with will bring valuable results. Planning for the future will add to the enjoyment of the holiday season, giving you plenty to think and talk about. Identifying incentives will encourage success. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Problems or delays while traveling can be expected. Relax and stay calm if situations at work become uncertain. Consider how you can stand out and differentiate how you do your job from the way your peers perform. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Take the plunge and get involved in functions that allow you to network as well as mix business with pleasure. Your ability to assess and react to a situation with clarity will encourage greater popularity. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't let situations at home get out of hand. Take care of your responsibilities if you want to avoid complaints and criticism. Once you have put your chores behind you, you'll be able to make personal alterations that boost your morale. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): You'll have insight into future trends and how best to use your skills. Clear a space at home that you can use to study, research and master what you enjoy most and you'll be able to turn it into a lucrative venture. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Reveal the ideas and concerns you have as well as the changes you want to make. Head in the direction that offers you greater stability and encourages you to be a better person. Walk away from anyone who has been a poor influence. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Use any extra time you have to rejuvenate or strategize how you are going to move forward with regard to work, money and using your skills in new and diverse ways. Avoid excessive behavior and people who are unpredictable. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Money matters will pan out better than anticipated. Make a change that will improve your current financial position. Physical alterations and home improvements will help you cut corners or find new ways to save money or bring in extra income. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Good fortune awaits. All you have to do is use your imagination and put your ideas into play. Start with the basics and let whatever you choose to do build slowly. Remain balanced and help will come from an unexpected source. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, caring and proactive. You are secretive and permissive.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	4	9				2	6	
			8		4			
				2	1			
	5	8					1	
		3				7		
	6					3	2	
			9	7				
			3		6			
	2	7				5	3	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	6	7	9	5	8	2	4	3
8	3	2	1	4	7	5	6	9
5	4	9	6	2	3	8	7	1
9	7	4	8	3	5	6	1	2
2	8	3	7	1	6	4	9	5
6	1	5	2	9	4	3	8	7
7	5	8	3	6	1	9	2	4
4	9	6	5	7	2	1	3	8
3	2	1	4	8	9	7	5	6

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/28

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

DOUBLE-ENTRY ACCOUNTING **Solution: 7 letters**

T	H	G	I	R	C	O	L	U	M	N	S	L	P	I
N	F	A	U	D	I	T	D	U	A	R	I	L	C	(H)
E	U	E	C	A	B	R	I	M	B	A	C	N	(S)	G
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E	D	D	E	D	R	S	N	I	O	V	(C)	I	M	N
T	A	I	N	R	S	R	L	K	A	R	H	K	O	I
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T	T	R	R	V	T	L	O	N	T	R	T	E	E	G
S	O	I	E	Y	E	D	S	A	C	C	S	R	Y	R
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Westbrook gets 15th triple-double, Thunder top Heat, 106-94

MIAMI (AP)—Russell Westbrook took a charge in the final minutes with the outcome already decided, was diving for loose balls and grabbed more defensive rebounds than any four Miami Heat players did combined.

Forget the triple-double.

It was everything else that had Heat coach Erik Spoelstra marveling.

Westbrook scored 29 points, grabbed 17 rebounds—all defensive—and added 11 assists for his 15th triple-double of the season, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Heat 106-94 on Tuesday night for their fourth straight win.

"He's competing until the very end," Spoelstra said. "Every single possession is the most important possession to him. Great, great lesson ... from somebody's that is really imposing a competitive will on every contest. He did what he does. What defines greatness is consistency, and that's what you can book pretty much every night."

Westbrook nearly had the triple-double by halftime, falling two rebounds shy. He got those in the first 5:21 of the third quarter.

AP

Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook recovers a rebound against Miami Heat center Hassan Whiteside, right, and Justise Winslow (20) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2016, in Miami.

"I thought our team did a great job of focusing in on what we do as a team and came out and put our foot down early," Westbrook said.

Enes Kanter scored 19 and Steven Adams added 15—including a highlight-reel dunk in the first half—for the Thunder.

Josh Richardson tied a career high with 22 points for the Heat. James Johnson scored 16 and Tyler Johnson added 15, both off the bench, for Miami. Oklahoma City's frontcourt limited Miami center Hassan Whiteside to 12 points and eight rebounds, most of that coming in the fourth quarter.

"They just used their strength," Westbrook said. "Steven does an amazing job and Enes ... those guys do an amazing job."

The Heat were without point guard Goran Dragic, sidelined by back spasms.

Oklahoma City dominated in the paint, outscoring Miami 58-32. And Westbrook scored 11 points in the fourth to help the Thunder close out the win.

"He's like an idol," said Oklahoma City's Alex Abrines, who scored 14 off the bench. "He goes 100 percent every play."

Westbrook grabbed the game's final rebound, dribbled out the clock and then slapped high-fives with fans who waited until the end just to see him depart.

"They see the numbers and what he does in games. They don't get a chance to see behind the scenes," Thunder coach Billy Donovan said. "The one thing I admire about him is he practices every single day. He has great energy every single day. He comes to every shootaround and he practices. He puts the time in and that's the reason why he's as successful as he is."

Rockets 123, Mavericks 107

In Dallas, James Harden scored 34 points and Houston completed a four-game season sweep of Dallas in a game marred by eight technical fouls.

Harden had 24 points at halftime and finished with 11 assists without playing in the fourth quarter. The Rockets broke a 37-all tie in the second with a 16-0 run and improved to 13-2 in December.

With two games left in the month, Houston can tie the franchise record of 15 wins from November 1996.

Five of the technicals came during the third quarter, and another during the break before the fourth when Houston's Trevor Ariza was assessed his second technical and ejected.

There were also two flagrant fouls, both against Dallas.

Celtics 113, rizzlies 103

In Boston, Avery Bradley scored 23 points, Isaiah Thomas had 21 points and seven assists, and Boston held off Memphis.

Gerald Green added a season-high 19 points and Jae Crowder scored 17 for Boston, which won for the sixth time in seven games and beat the Grizzlies for the second time in a week. The Celtics needed overtime and a career-high 44 points from Thomas for a 112-109 win in Memphis last Tuesday.

Marc Gasol had 26 points and nine assists for Memphis. Zach Randolph scored 10 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter to help keep the Grizzlies close and pulled down 10 rebounds. Tony Allen had 17 points and eight rebounds for Memphis, which was coming off a 112-102 loss in Orlando the night before but hung with Boston until the final minute.

Jazz 102, Lakers 100

In Los Angeles, Joe Ingles made a 3-pointer with 21.6 seconds left to lead Utah over Los Angeles, snapping a three-game losing streak.

Gordon Hayward led the Jazz with 31 points and nine rebounds. Ingles finished with 13 points and Rudy Gobert had 12 points and 11 rebounds.

The Lakers had a final chance to win the game but D'Angelo Russell shot an air-ball on a 3-point attempt.

Julius Randle had 25 points and 12 rebounds for his team-high ninth double-double for the Lakers, who have lost 13 of their last 15. Lou Williams added 22 points off the bench, including nine in the fourth quarter.

It was a rough night for the Lakers' two No. 2 picks. Russell went 2 for 11 from the field and Brandon Ingram was 2 for 5.

Durant calls for NBA to toss Last Two Minute Report

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Kevin Durant is calling on the NBA to toss out the Last Two Minute Report because he, like the league's officials, believes it could only lead to more errors because referees might become tentative while trying to be perfect.

"They should get rid of it, refs don't deserve that. They're trying their hardest to get the plays right then you look at a play in slo-mo and say it's wrong," Durant said after practice Tuesday. He felt it was unfair "that you throw the refs under the bus like that after the game. Like it matters, the game's over, we're moving on."

No stewing by KD and the Golden State Warriors upon learning the NBA acknowledged two missed calls late in the team's one-point Christmas Day loss at Cleveland. They lost this one all on their own.

"The refs didn't lose us that game. We lost that game. We could have been better," Durant said. "This happened to be in our favour — not even in our favour, we don't get the win. To say that I got fouled and the tech and all that stuff, just move on. You don't have to throw the refs under the bus like that."

In an NBA Finals rematch, the champion Cavaliers won 109-108 with the NBA saying Monday that LeBron James should have received a technical for hanging on the rim with 1:43 to play and that Richard Jefferson fouled Durant on the game's final play.

Warriors coach Steve Kerr called the officiating crew from Sunday "outstanding" and some of the NBA's best. He also appreciates the league "being transparent."

"The officials didn't decide that game, we had a 14-point lead in the fourth quarter," Kerr said.

The National Basketball Referees Association has called for reform regarding the Last Two Minute Report because it "will cause more harm than good for the officials and the game. We call for an end to L2M reporting and other transparency measures and a return to private, league-managed evaluations, reviews, education, training, and discipline for NBA officials."

Durant is concerned how Sunday's crew might react and perform in upcoming games given it was called out.

"So for the next game, that group of refs, whoever it is, they're going to come out and they're going to ref the game, they're going to be tense when they're reffing the game and they're going to try to get every play right and they're going to try to be perfect without just going out there and relaxing and making the right call," he said. "You can't fine us when we go out there and criticize them but throw them under the bus for a two-minute report. What about the first quarter, what about the second quarter, third quarter?"

Draymond Green also dismissed the idea that the Warriors somehow got robbed at the end.

"If we do what we got to do it doesn't come down to that Last Two Minute Report anyway," Green said. "Not that I care about that report or not. It's kind of pointless. But it should have never got to that point."

Meanwhile, Green — who was hit with a technical for hanging on the rim against Utah last Tuesday and has been penalized for excessive celebrations — insists he won't do anything differently even after picking up his team-leading seventh technical Sunday when he emphatically walked to the bench after a foul call and yelled. Late last season, he tried to curtail his Ts and cut down on arguing.

"It is what it is. I'm going to continue to be me," he said. "Continue to play my game and however they're going to officiate they're going to officiate. I can't change that. I worry about the things in life I can control. Everything else that's out of my control, why stress over it? ... I don't know what else I can watch. I don't really talk to them much anymore. Just continue to be me. If I get a tech, so be it.

"I don't know what other approach to take other than walking toward the bench. There's no other approach to take than that. I'm going to continue to be the only person I know how to be and that's me. There's a lot of guys that get home at night and they're exhausted from acting all day. I only know how to be Draymond. That's who I've been my entire life, that's who I'm going to continue to be. I won't be exhausted from acting when I get home. That ain't going to work for me."

Phil Jackson, Jeanie Buss say they have ended engagement

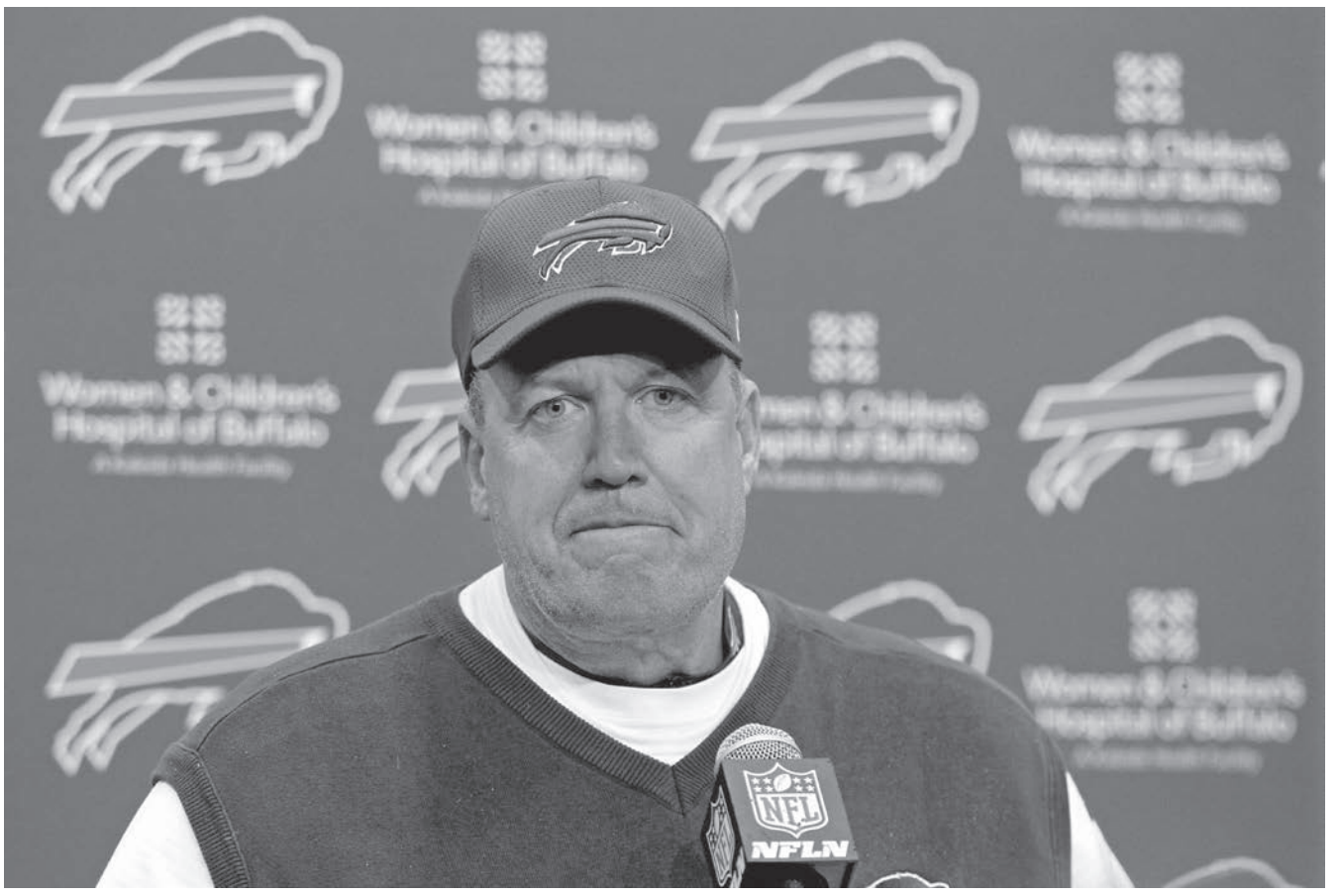
NEW YORK (AP)—New York Knicks President Phil Jackson and Lakers executive Jeanie Buss have ended their engagement.

Jackson tweeted a statement Tuesday night in which the couple said because of their professional obligations and geographic distance, "sustaining the relationship has been difficult." They added that they had shared wonderful moments and "expect to remain supportive of each other in the future."

Buss, the Lakers' executive vice president, later tweeted that she would always love Jackson but that the Lakers were the love of her life and "it's not fair to him or Lakers to not have my undivided attention."

Jackson and Buss began dating in 1999 while he coached the Lakers and were engaged before he moved across the country to take the Knicks job in 2014. Buss not only encouraged him to take the position but also to coach the team, though Jackson said he knew he wasn't physically up to that.

Bills fire coach Rex Ryan ahead of last game of season



AP

In a Sunday, Dec. 11, 2016 file photo, Buffalo Bills head coach Rex Ryan talks to reporters after an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers, in Orchard Park, N.Y.

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP) — Rex Ryan's inability to back up his boasts of building a bully—particularly on defense—in Buffalo led to the Bills firing their high-profile coach one game short of completing his second full season.

Terry Pegula, who made Ryan's hiring his first big splash as owner, was the person who informed Ryan of his dismissal Tuesday. The decision came three days after a 34-31 overtime loss to Miami which eliminated Buffalo (7-8) from contention, and extended the NFL's longest active playoff drought to 17 years.

"We mutually agreed that that the time to part ways is now," Pegula said in a statement released by the team. "These decisions are never easy."

Pegula then noted his wife in saying: "Kim and I and our entire Bills organization share in the same disappointment and frustration as our fans, but we remain committed to our goal of bringing a championship to western New York."

Ryan had three years remaining on his contract.

General manager Doug Whaley's job appears secure after being put in charge of the Bills coaching search, the team's third in four years. Buffalo is also moving on to its eighth coach since the playoff drought began during Wade Phillips' final year as coach in 2000.

Ryan replaced Doug Marrone, who opted out of his contract following a 9-7 finish in 2014, and three months after the Pegulas purchased the Bills from the estate of Hall of Fame owner Ralph Wilson.

Assistant head coach and offensive coordinator Anthony Lynn will coach the Bills in their season finale at the New York Jets (4-11) on Sunday. Lynn is also considered a candidate to replace Ryan permanently because of his familiarity with an offense that is closing in on leading the NFL in rushing for a second consecutive season.

Lynn, a long-time Ryan assistant, was promoted to coordinator in September, when Ryan fired Greg Roman after an 0-2 start.

The 54-year-old Ryan appeared emotionally drained during a 20-minute news conference on Monday.

He called the loss to Miami his most painful as a Bills coach, and the second-most painful in his 20 NFL seasons as a coach or assistant. Ryan also second-guessed some of the decisions he made during the game, including punting from his own 41 with a little over four minutes left in overtime. He said he hoped the loss wouldn't become his defining moment in Buffalo.

"But if it is, it's something I've got to live with," he said.

Bills defensive lineman Leger Douzable voiced his displeasure with Ryan's firing on his Twitter account.

"I'm tired of people talking about the 17 year drought REX was here for 2 of those years hard to build a winner if coach changes every two years," Douzable wrote in a series of posts.

Ryan finished with a 15-16 record with Buffalo and is 61-66 overall, including a six-year tenure with the New York Jets. And it was Ryan's hiring by the Bills in January 2015 that electrified a fan base because of his larger-than-life persona and reputation as a defensive specialist.

Ryan stirred the fans even more during his inaugural news conference by vowing to build the Bills into a bully.

His promises eventually fell short, particularly on defense.

Last year, the Bills finished 19th in yards allowed—the worst ranking for Ryan in his 11 years as a head coach or coordinator. Buffalo also managed just 21 sacks, a franchise-low for a 16-game season, and after the defense led the NFL with 54 the previous season under coordinator Jim Schwartz.

The defense underperformed once again this year, despite Ryan's offseason vows that it'll be improved.

Buffalo has allowed 30 or more points five times and allowed more than 400 yards offense four times, both matching last year's total. Opposing running backs also enjoyed three of the top six outings against Buffalo in team history.

Miami's Jay Ajayi had 206 yards rushing on Saturday after a 214-yard outing against Buffalo in October. And Le'Veon Bell had 236 yards rushing—the most against Buffalo in franchise history—in Pittsburgh's 27-20 win at Buffalo on Dec. 11.

The Bills also fired Ryan's twin brother, Rob Ryan, from his position as an assistant head coach with the responsibility to oversee defense.

This has been a difficult year for the Ryans, who mourned the death of their father, Buddy Ryan, in June.

Buffalo's drought is tied for the fifth-longest in league history, and the longest since the New Orleans Saints failed to make the playoffs during their first 20 NFL seasons (1967-86).

Another major decision facing the next head coach is quarterback.

Starter Tyrod Taylor's future is not secure despite signing a lucrative five-year extension and restructuring the final season of his contract in August. The Bills can opt out of the deal after this season.

Rookie stars want wins, even with Cowboys secure atop NFC

AP

Detroit Lions' Johnson Bademosi, brings down Dallas Cowboys' Dak Prescott (4) after a short run as tight end Jason Witten watches in the second half of an NFL football game, Monday, Dec. 26, 2016, in Arlington, Texas.

FRISCO, Texas (AP)—Dak Prescott can help the Dallas Cowboys set a franchise record with 14 wins. Ezekiel Elliott could break Eric Dickerson's 33-year-old rookie rushing record with a career high and a few more yards.

Other than that, Dallas doesn't have much on the line in the regular-season finale at Philadelphia on Sunday. The Cowboys (13-2) are guaranteed the best record in the NFC, and the home-field advantage that goes with it, after beating the Detroit Lions 42-21.

Prescott just wants to keep playing, and it's not because of that franchise mark or because he could break the record he now shares with Pittsburgh's Ben Roethlisberger for most wins by a rookie quarterback (13).

"I want to play every game," said Prescott, whose 11-game winning streak put Tony Romo on the bench when the 10-year starter returned from a preseason back injury. "I want to keep this momentum going. Any rep I can get is making myself better and I want to take advantage of those."

Prescott is 47 of 56 passing for 491 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions in two games since his worst as a pro in a 10-7 loss to the New York Giants. He has 23 touchdowns with just four interceptions and has risen to fifth on the NFL's rookie passing yardage list with 3,630 yards.

If he plays long enough against the last-place Eagles (6-9), he needs 110 yards to pass Peyton Manning, who had 3,739 yards for Indianapolis in 1998.

Owner Jerry Jones said he isn't worried about Prescott getting injured.

"Look at what Dak Prescott learned tonight and what's now in his computer that wasn't there before tonight," Jones said. "With him being a rookie, we really need all these reps he can get, including any reps we get this week and next week, because we want him to be as educated and as well-prepared and have as much experience as he can when we get in the playoffs."

Prescott was reminded after the Lions game that Oakland's Derek Carr and Tennessee's Marcus Mariota had their seasons end with broken legs in Week 16.

"It's football," Prescott said. "You think about those things, they happen. You're just reacting and playing ball. You have to take those chances."

Jones has a different view on the injury issue with Romo, who hasn't played since Thanksgiving last year. The question is whether he needs snaps in a game to be better prepared to replace an injured Prescott in the playoffs. Coach Jason Garrett hasn't addressed the question of whether Romo will play.

"We don't feel like we can gain anything from him running a few plays or a series of plays or several plays," Jones said. "It would not be worth the risk."

Elliott is more cautious than his rookie roommate, saying there's a "bigger purpose" than the NFL rushing leader reaching Dickerson's mark of 1,808 yards from 1983. The former Ohio State star has 1,631 yards and would need 178 against the Eagles. He had his career high of 159 in Week 15 against Tampa Bay.

But that doesn't mean Elliott's approach is any different from Prescott's. The Cowboys weren't holding back either, using a trick play against Detroit to get receiver Dez Bryant his first career touchdown pass on a reverse pitch and throw to tight end Jason Witten.

"We want to go out and win ballgames every week," said Elliott, who has the third-highest rookie rushing total behind Dickerson and George Rogers (1,674 with New Orleans in 1981). "We don't care if we have the playoff spot clinched. We don't care if we have home field clinched. We just want to win ballgames."

By beating the Eagles, the best rookie quarterback and running back in franchise history will have the ultimate club mark: victories.

Sidelined with injury in '14, Barrett gets another chance

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)— When Ohio State captured an improbable national championship two years ago, J.T. Barrett was pushing himself around on the sideline on a scooter that kept his broken right ankle elevated.

After a breakout season filling in for the injured Braxton Miller in 2014, Barrett went down in the Michigan game, ushering in third-string quarterback Cardale Jones and consecutive victories over Wisconsin, Alabama and Oregon. Barrett could only lean on the scooter and watch the heroics.

A healthy, confident Barrett led the Buckeyes to an 11-1 record and a spot in the College Football Playoff against Clemson on New Year's Eve. Instead of being relegated to the fringe, he's now is at the center of intense bowl game prep with a chance to play for another national championship.

"I think it's a blessing just to be healthy throughout the long season," Barrett said. "Just to be able to play, man, it's crazy. I'm thankful for that."

Off the field, Barrett is soft-spoken but self-assured. On the field, pre-game and at halftime, the young Texan can be seen yelling at his teammates to fire them up . He's become known for online videos of his fiery locker room speeches, but talks so softly in interviews that sometimes he's hard to hear.

AP

In a Saturday, Dec. 6, 2014 file photo, injured Ohio State quarterback J.T. Barrett is seen on the sidelines before the start of the Big Ten Conference championship NCAA college football game between Ohio State and Wisconsin, in Indianapolis.

A split personality?

"I think it's what's needed at the time," he told a news conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, on Tuesday. "I don't need to be screaming and yelling talking to y'all. Y'all are not about to play Clemson.

"... Outside of the ball game scenario, this is who you get," Barrett said. "I apologize if I'm not throwing water bottles across the room and knocking reporters, but I'm just not that guy."

Despite a stumble at Penn State and some ongoing difficulties getting on the same page with his young group of wide receivers, Barrett has been the catalyst of the Ohio State offense. He has consistently found ways to win, tucking the ball and picking up yards when the Buckeyes needed it most. Although he couldn't match his 2014 numbers, Barrett broke the school record this season for all-purpose touchdowns while throwing for 2,428 yards and 24 scores and rushing for 847 yards and another nine TDs.

"I think that anybody will tell you that when you're taken away from the game that you love you grow to appreciate it," said wide receiver Noah Brown, who sat out all of the 2015 season rehabbing a broken leg. "And I'm sure that this time around he's got a great appreciation for what he's able to do and takes great responsibility for the outcome."

Ohio State lost 16 starters after an uneven 2015 season. Their championship hopes faded with a loss to Michigan State in the second-to-last game of the season. Barrett ended up taking over for an ineffective Jones during the year and also served a one-game suspension for drunken driving.

SPORTS

From Page 28

baseball are among the 25 regular sports to be played in the FISU event four years from now. The list also includes American football, canoe, cheerleading, cross country, cycling, equestrian, floorball, futsal, handball, modern pentathlon, orienteering rugby 7s, rowing, sailing, shooting, ski orienteering, speed skate, sports climbing, squash, triathlon, waterski, and weightlifting. FISU is also looking for host countries for the combat sports cluster (boxing, karate, Muay Thai, sambo, wrestling, and wushu) and mind games cluster (chess and bridge).

Application for bid and all other supporting documents must be turned in on or before Sept. 29, 2017, while the winning bids will be announced on Dec. 1, 2017. The bids will be analyzed by FISU's Technical Delegate and WUC Evaluation Commission, while applicants will be invited to present their bids to the commission in October next year.

The WUC is a biennial event for athletes in the 17 to 25 age group and enrolled in a post secondary university/college/institution. In 2018, the 33 events in WUC are spread across 29 countries, including FISU's newest members Argentina (for rowing), Indonesia (wushu), and Namibia (rugby 7s). Beach volleyball will be held in Munich, Germany, while the Philippines and Chinese-Taipei are hosting the golf and baseball tournaments, respectively.

Hosting an event in the 2020 FISU World University Championships will be a good dry run for the CNMI as it holds the Pacific Mini Games on Saipan the following year.

NEWCASTLE

From Page 28

Tenorio and Joshua De Leon, contributed two goals apiece. Joshua Abragan and Diana Maniacop, who are also part of the islands' national youth squads, added one goal each to complete Newcastle's rout of Evan FC.

Go Sekiguchi logged the lone goal for Evan FC, which holds a 0-1-2 win-draw-loss, pending the results of its afternoon game yesterday. Evan FC is in fifth place behind Elite FC (0-1-1), Malo Fatu (3-0-1), Astig (3-0-0), and Newcastle FC (3-0-0). Betde (0-0-2) and Kanoa Ali'I (0-0-4) complete the field.

Newcastle FC's two other victories were against Betde, 15-0, and Kanoa Ali'i, 16-0. Newcastle FC faced Betde last Tuesday and drew four goals each from Tekopua and Tenorio to pound its foe. Borja and De Leon fired three goals apiece, while Maniacop made one.

In other results last Tuesday, Astig also shut down Evan FC, 8-0, while Malo Fatu downed Elite FC, 5-0.

Astig, another favorite in the division because of the presence of the CNMI youth players in its lineup, got two goals from Anthony Fruit and once each from James Ermitanio, Alan Hinson, Louie Calayag, Dai Podziewski, Angel Sally, and Gillian Villagomez.

Malo Fatu, which is likely to join Astig and Newcastle in the Final Four, leaned on the three goals of Andruw Omelau to top Elite FC last Tuesday. Katrina Costales and Krizel Tuazon knocked in the two other goals for Malo Fatu.

Malo Fatu played two more games yesterday and had a split, winning over Kanoa Ali'i, 10-2, to recover from a 2-6 loss to Astig. Paulynn Joyce had a hat trick in Malo Fatu's victory, while Tuazon and John Michael Rojas contributed two each, and Kirt Andon, Thaiphi Austria, and Omelau recorded one apiece. Britany Wally and Ian Maniago had one goal each for Kanoa Ali'i

In the Astig-Malo Fatu tiff, Hinson and Fruit gave the former two goals each, while Ermitanio and Villagomez made one apiece. Rojas registered all two goals for Malo Fatu.

Meanwhile, in the U12-coed division, Kanoa Mighty Orange and Kanoa Ali'i settled for a draw yesterday, 7-7.

Markus Toves gained three goals for Kanoa Mighty Orange, which drew two from Merrick Toves and one each from Devin Propst and Paulynn Joyce. Brian Lubao also had a hat trick for Kanoa Ali'i, while Jaydee Jose contributed two, and Daniel Pablo and Rizza Relucio made one each.

Pending the complete results of the co-ed U12 division games yesterday, Fake Madrid II leads the field with its 3-0 record, while Kanoa Mighty Orange is in second place with its 2-1-1 mark. Gene Weaver's Team holds 1-0-2 card, while Kanoa Ali'I has a 0-1-3 slate.

All four squads will advance to the single-elimination playoff round that will take place tomorrow.

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fielded in the game found their way to contribute to the team's cause and by the end of the first half, the winning squad was already enjoying a 49-21 advantage. The Ol'Aces 2 was never threatened in the second half and even pulled away further to give Gen Cup a beating.

In the first game, the 670 Sonics also got off to a good start and never looked back to win its first game in the tournament.

The 670 Sonics led at the break, 42-29, thanks to the 22 first half points of Rafael Ordona. The 670 Sonics gunner scored 9 straight points early in the game and then nailed 8 of his team's last 9 markers in the first 20 minutes of play for their double-digit advantage at the half.

Ordona was held to a point in the second half, but Khristian Itaas and Sean Apasan were there to pick up where he left off to hand the 670 Sonics the 10-point winning margin. Itaas finished with 14 markers, while Apasan tallied 12.

Jediael Maualo had 20 points to pace MHS.

Meanwhile, in the lone U25 division match last Monday, the Ol'Aces 2 topped Rollers 2, 54-38.

The Ol'Aces 2 built an early double-digit lead, 27-11, and kept going in the second half to win its debut. Jerald Castillo and Jeff Castro teamed up for the Ol'Aces 11, firing 14 and 10 points, respectively.

U16 DIVISION

First Game

670 Sonics 69 — Ordona 22, Itaas 14, Apasan 12, Cadag 7, Dionisio 4, Ejercito 6, Sabangan 2, Bayot 2.

MHS 59 — Maualo 20, Prado 17, Tenorio 11, Zhang 6, Abejo 3, Calayag 2.

Scoring by halves: 42-29, 69-59.

Second Game

Ol'Aces 2 97 — Lizama 17, Santos 16, Johnny 13, Ngirarois 11, Quitugua 10, Okaruru 9, Deleon Guerrero 6, Pangelinan 3, Ferrari 3.

Gen Cup 43 — Cruz 12, De Leon 10, Ibanez 9, Cai 6, Xu 4, Sacdalan 1, Cheng 1.

Scoring by halves: 49-21, 97-43.

U25

Ol'Aces 2 54 — Castillo 14, Castro 10, Siech 8, Ngirarois 6, Blake 5, Kabiriel 5, Paragados 4, Diyco 2.

Rollers 2 38— Tengco 10, Factor 8, John 7, Fidelino 7, Darag 4, Pangelinan 2.

Scoring by quarters: 27-11, 54-38.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	22	8	.733	—
Boston	19	13	.594	4
New York	16	14	.533	6
Brooklyn	8	22	.267	14
Philadelphia	7	23	.233	15

Southeast Division

Charlotte	17	14	.548	—
Atlanta	15	16	.484	2
Washington	14	16	.467	2½
Orlando	15	18	.455	3
Miami	10	22	.313	7½

Central Division

Cleveland	23	7	.767	—
Chicago	15	16	.484	8½
Milwaukee	14	15	.483	8½
Indiana	15	17	.469	9
Detroit	15	18	.455	9½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	25	6	.806	—
Houston	24	9	.727	2
Memphis	20	14	.588	6½
New Orleans	12	21	.364	14
Dallas	9	23	.281	16½

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	20	12	.625	—
Utah	19	13	.594	1
Denver	13	18	.419	6½
Portland	13	20	.394	7½
Minnesota	10	21	.323	9½

Pacific Division

Golden State	27	5	.844	—
L.A. Clippers	22	11	.667	5½
Sacramento	14	17	.452	12½
L.A. Lakers	12	23	.343	16½
Phoenix	9	22	.290	17½

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Westbrook, OKC	31	324	277	984	31.7
Davis, NOR	31	326	248	919	29.6
Cousins, SAC	30	298	223	873	29.1
Harden, HOU	32	258	270	881	27.5
DeRozan, TOR	30	298	216	825	27.5
Lillard, POR	32	280	223	865	27.0
Thomas, BOS	27	226	211	728	27.0
Durant, GOL	32	295	188	838	26.2
James, CLE	27	255	128	688	25.5
Leonard, SAN	31	247	202	755	24.4
Curry, GOL	32	250	152	772	24.1
Butler, CHI	31	231	247	744	24.0
Irving, CLE	28	248	100	662	23.6
Antetokounmpo, MIL	29	241	176	678	23.4
Wall, WAS	28	237	145	652	23.3
Anthony, NYK	29	234	132	659	22.7
Walker, CHA	30	239	112	669	22.3
Towns, MIN	31	262	124	688	22.2
Beal, WAS	27	204	116	599	22.2
McCollum, POR	33	272	105	732	22.2

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Gobert, UTA	134	192	.698
Jordan, LAC	145	221	.656
Howard, ATL	155	240	.646
Capela, HOU	151	236	.640
Adams, OKC	148	250	.592
Zeller, CHA	121	207	.585
Jokic, DEN	135	231	.584
Gortat, WAS	148	258	.574
Kanter, OKC	159	282	.564
Plumlee, POR	150	268	.560

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Whiteside, MIA	31	131	330	461	14.9
Drummond, DET	32	124	308	432	13.5
Howard, ATL	27	127	224	351	13.0
Jordan, LAC	33	109	316	425	12.9
Gobert, UTA	31	95	274	369	11.9
Davis, NOR	31	68	294	362	11.7
Gortat, WAS	30	96	252	348	11.6
Chandler, PHX	23	73	189	262	11.4
Towns, MIN	31	105	245	350	11.3
Love, CLE	27	66	225	291	10.8

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Harden, HOU	32	381	11.9
Westbrook, OKC	31	338	10.9
Wall, WAS	28	277	9.9
Paul, LAC	30	288	9.6
James, CLE	27	231	8.6
Green, GOL	30	218	7.3
Teague, IND	32	231	7.2
Lowry, TOR	30	216	7.2
Rubio, MIN	26	187	7.2
Rondo, CHI	27	193	7.1

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2016 Public School System Basketball Tournament

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Marianas High School's Angel Factor pulls up for a jumper against two Mt. Carmel School defenders during their game in the 2016 Public School System Basketball Tournament held early this month at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

A Marianas High School player attacks the defense of Mt. Carmel School's Joseph Muna, left, and Seok Jun Yun, third left, while Tony Deleon Guerrero, right, stays close in the play.

Mt. Carmel School's Joseph Muna drives against Marianas High School's Jude Tengco.

Marianas High School's Jude Tengco, left, looks for a teammate to pass the ball to, while Mt. Carmel School's Seok Jun Yun reaches in for the leather.

Mt. Carmel School's Seok Jun Yun gets the rebound.

Mt. Carmel School's Tony Deleon Guerrero, left, loses the leather on his way to the basket.

A Kagman High School player drives against two Saipan Southern High School defenders.

Kagman High School's Dean Blake, center, is doubled team by Saipan Southern High School's June Alipio, left, and Coby Santos.

Westbrook gets 15th triple-double, Thunder top Heat, 106-94

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Bills fire coach Rex Ryan ahead of last game of season

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Newcastle FC takes semifinals seat

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Newcastle FC's Sunjoon Tenorio, left, and Betde's Mark Esalan battle for possession during their game in the co-ed U16 division of the 2016 Saipan Soccer School Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament last Tuesday at the TSL Sports Complex.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Early favorite Newcastle FC extended its winning streak in the co-ed U16 division of the 2016 Saipan Soccer School Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament following another lopsided victory yesterday at the TSL Sports Complex.

Newcastle FC, which has national youth players in its roster, hammered Evan FC, 13-1, to remain undefeated in three games and secure a semis ticket in the seven-team field despite having three more matches left (including its duel against Elite FC yesterday afternoon) in the elimination. The Top 4 teams after the round-robin preliminary will move into the semifinal round.

Guinevere Borja, who suited up for the CNMI U19 Girls National Team that played in the AFC U19 Women's Championship 2017 Qualifier in China this year, scored four goals in Newcastle's domination of Evan FC. Mareko Tekopua—another member of the Commonwealth's youth squad—chipped in three goals, while his fellow CNMI youth standouts, Sunjoon

See NEWCASTLE on Page 26

Sports groups urged to consider hosting FISU event

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Fédération Internationale du Sport Universitaire has started its search for host countries for the 33 competitions in the 2020 FISU World University Championships.

An invitation to bid has been sent to FISU member-nations, including the CNMI and Northern Marianas Sports Association president Michael White is encouraging local sports federations to consider submitting a bid to host a few contests for the WUC.

"The CNMI is capable of hosting events like these. In particular, I want to urge beach volleyball, baseball, and golf to consider submitting bids," White said.

"These are the sports in which we have excellent facilities, good organization, and experience in hosting large events. We can do this," the NMSA head added.

The CNMI, for more than a decade, has hosted the Marianas Beach Volleyball Cup, which has drawn participants from Japan, Korea, U.S., China, Guam, and Australia. In baseball, the Commonwealth hosted the inaugural Micronesian Baseball Classic this year, while there are a lot of world-class golf courses here that could accommodate entries in the WUC.

Golf, beach volleyball, and

See SPORTS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Russ Quinn serves during his and Dave Rillera's game against Bruce Berline and Dan Westphal during the 2016 Endless Summer Beach Volleyball Classic held at the Hyatt Regency Saipan. Beach volleyball is one of the sports that will be played in the 2020 FISU World University Games.

670 Sonics, Ol'Aces 2 ease past foes

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The 670 Sonics and Ol'Aces 2 coasted to victories in the boys U16 division of the 2016 TanHoldings Christmas Basketball Tournament yesterday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

The 670 Sonics prevailed in its debut game at the expense of Marianas High School, 69-59, while the Ol'Aces 2 also barged into the win column after a 97-43 crushing of GenCup.

The Ol'Aces 2, which had its victory over the 670 Thunder forfeited after fielding ineligible players in last Monday's opener, proved it could still win by a big margin after showing a balance offense against Gen Cup. Five Ol'Aces 2 players broke into double figures with Rikko Lizama leading the way with his 17 points. Coby Santos added 16, while Jay Junior Johnny and Troy Ngirarois chipped 13 and 11, respectively. Traven Quitugua was the fifth Ol'Aces 2 player to score in twin digits with his 10 markers, while Javier Okaruru and Greg Deleon Guerrero combined for 15 points.

Every player the Ol'Aces 2

See 670 on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Ol'Aces 2's Jay Junior Johnny steps on the breaks before unloading a shot against a Gen Cup defender during their boys U16 division game in the TanHoldings holiday caging yesterday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.